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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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Trump doubles tariff on India to 50% over Russian oil

WASHINGTON/ NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

- The Indian government condemned the measure as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable", vowing to take necessary actions to protect national interests.

US President Donald Trump has doubled tariffs on Indian goods to 50 per cent, penalising New Delhi for continuing Russian oil imports. This move, effective from 27 August, is expected to severely impact key Indi-an export sectors including textiles, marine, leather, gems, jewellery, chemicals, and machinery.

India is the only country singled out for such a steep penalty under the executive order "Addressing Threats to the US by the Government of the Russian Federation". While China and Turkey face 30 per cent and 15 per cent tariffs respectively, India now shares the highest tariff bracket with Brazil.

The Indian government condemned the measure as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable", vowing to take necessary actions to protect national interests. The Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) warned the move could affect 55 per cent of India's $86 billion exports to the US.

India, which imports 88 per cent of its crude oil, saw Russian oil rise from 0.2 per cent of its supply pre-2021 to become its largest source post-Ukraine invasion, driven by discounted rates. In July alone, India imported 1.6 million barrels per day from Russia, out of a total of 5 million.

Tariff-exempt categories include pharmaceuticals, energy products, critical minerals, and electronics such as smartphones, tablets, and semiconductors.

The timing is notable, with a US delegation scheduled to visit India on 25 August for the sixth round of bi-lateral trade agreement (BTA) talks.

India now faces a competitive disadvantage in the US market, where rivals like Bangladesh (35 per cent), Myanmar (40 per cent), and China (30 per cent) enjoy lower tariffs. *—PTI*

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India is the only country singled out for such a steep penalty under the executive order signed by US President Donald Trump ***PHOTO: PTI***

PM may visit Japan, China later this month

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to travel to Japan and China beginning around 29 August. In the first leg of his trip, Modi is expected to visit Japan to hold annual summit talks with his Japanese counterpart. He will later attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. If the visit to China takes place, then it will be the Modi's first trip to the country after the eastern Ladakh border standoff. The SCO summit will be held from 31 August to 1 September. *—PTI*

Ajit Doval in Moscow amid US tariff threats

MOSCOW, 6 AUG

National Security Adviser Ajit Doval arrived in Moscow for high-level talks on defence cooperation, Russian oil supplies, and preparations for the upcoming Modi-Putin summit, amid rising US tariffs. Discussions will include S-400 missile deliveries. The Kremlin defended India's right to trade independently, while Delhi termed Western sanctions "unjustified." India's Russian oil imports have surged from under 1 per cent in 2022 to nearly 40 per cent at their peak. *—Agencies*

Air India to fully resume int'l flights by 1 Oct

DUBAI, 6 AUG

Air India announced it will fully resume international flights by 1 October, following a phased return of routes this week. Services were suspended after the fatal crash of flight AI171 in Ahmedabad on 12 June, prompting a self-imposed "Safety Pause" for checks on its Boeing 787 fleet. Full resumption is expected to restore long-haul routes and stabilise schedules ahead of the peak travel season. *—Agecnies*

SC orders M'rashtra to end hand-pulled rickshaws

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Supreme Court has directed Maharashtra to ban the "inhuman" practice of hand-pulled rickshaws in Matheran within six months, urging a shift to e-rickshaws. The bench, led by Chief Justice BR Gavai, condemned the continued use of manual rickshaws 78 years after independence, calling it a violation of human dignity and constitutional promises of social justice. Matheran, an eco-sensitive hill station where vehicles are banned, relies on these rickshaws for transport. The Court ordered the state to provide e-rickshaws on rent. *—PTI*

'NO MAJOR THREAT'

RBI keeps repo rates unchanged at 5.5% amid Trump's tariffs

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged on Wednesday, as policymakers weighed the risks posed by US President Donald Trump's trade policies and the uncertainties surrounding the potential for higher tariffs.

The six-member rate-setting panel, headed by RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra, held the repurchase rate at 5.5 per cent in a unanimous vote and decided to continue with a 'neutral' stance.

While on-track monsoon rains and the approaching festival season are expected to provide buoyancy to the economy, global trade challenges continue to linger, Malhotra said, announcing the decision of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

He, however, did not directly speak about US tariff actions. Trump last month slapped a 25 per cent duty on all Indian goods entering the US from 7 August, and on Tuesday threatened to substantially hike the tariff for New Delhi's continued purchase of Russian oil.

The pause follows a 100 basis point cut in interest rate over three bi-monthly MPC meets in 2025. The RBI lowered its inflation forecast to 3.1 per cent for the current fiscal year from 3.7 per cent earlier as Malhotra flagged a rise in headline inflation towards the end of the year. *—PTI*

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HIGHLIGHTS OF RBI'S MONETARY POLICY

Following are the highlights of Reserve Bank of India's bi-monthly monetary policy announced by Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Wednesday:

- Repo unchanged at 5.5%.
- MPC unanimously decided to keep policy rate unchanged.
- GDP growth projection retained at 6.5 pc.
- Governor says domestic growth remains resilient, broadly evolving.
- Inflation forecast lowered to 3.1%.
- RBI to standardise claim settlement procedure in bank accounts and lockers of deceased bank customers.
- RBI Retail-Direct platform to enable SIP in treasury bills.
- Next meeting on 29 Sept.

SC seeks data from EC over 65L voters removed in Bihar

Petitioners claim 75% new voters added

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Election Commission (EC) to submit by August 9 details of around 65 lakh electors excluded from the draft electoral rolls in poll-bound Bihar. A bench comprising Justices Surya Kant, Ujjal Bhuyan and N Kotiswar Singh instructed the EC to provide the deletion data, already shared with political parties, to the NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

ADR has challenged the EC's 24 June directive for a Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and filed a fresh plea demanding that the names of deleted voters be published along with reasons — whether deceased, migrated, or otherwise.

The bench noted that reasons for deletion may be clarified later, as the current list is only a draft. However, advocate Prashant Bhushan, representing ADR, argued that despite sharing the deletion list with parties, the EC has not clearly stated the cause of each removal.

The court told the EC to file a reply by Saturday, allowing Bhushan to examine it ahead of the hearings scheduled for 12–13 August. Bhushan also claimed that 75 per cent of voters added during the SIR lacked required documents and were included based on booth-level officers' recommendations. Previously, the court warned of intervention if there was "mass exclusion" and directed the EC to accept Aadhaar and voter ID, highlighting their "presumption of genuineness." On 1 August, the EC published draft rolls listing 7.24 crore voters, excluding 65.63 lakh — citing deaths (22.34 lakh), permanent migration (36.28 lakh), and duplication (7.01 lakh). Final rolls are due on 30 September after the claims and objections phase ends on 1 September.

The EC maintains that the SIR enhances electoral integrity by removing ineligible entries. *—PTI*

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The bench noted that reasons for deletion may be clarified later, as the current list is only a draft ***PHOTO: ANI***

Another girl sets herself ablaze in Odisha, dies

KENDRAPARA, 6 AUG

A female college student died after she allegedly immolated herself at her house in Odisha's Kendrapara district on Wednesday over blackmail by her boyfriend, police said.

This was the third incident of a woman dying of burn injuries in Odisha since 12 July.

The incident took place in Kathiapada village.

The father of the woman, who was aged around 20 years, claimed she poured an inflammable substance over herself and set herself on fire in their house when she was alone.

He claimed that she had filed a police complaint six months ago, but no action was taken.

"The police asked my daughter to block the man's mobile number if he was harassing her," the father said.

A 20-year-old female student of FM College in Balasore immolated herself on the college campus on 12 July, and died two days later.

Another 15-year-old girl from Balanga area of Puri also died from burn injuries on 2 August. *—PTI*

1 critical as mob assaults 4 YouTubers in Dharmasthala

MANGALURU, 6 AUG

Four men, representing three YouTube channels, including a cameraman, were attacked by a large mob near Dharmasthala in Dakshina Kannada district on Wednesday evening, when they were interviewing a person, amid an ongoing probe by SIT into the alleged mass burial case, police said.

The incident occurred close to the residence of a college-goer, who was raped and found dead in 2012 in Dharmasthala town.

Ajay Anchan, Abhishek, Vijay and a cameraman, were interviewing Rajat of 'Bigg Boss Kannada' when they were assaulted by an estimated 50 to 60 individuals near Pangal Cross here. They also damaged the camera equipment.

All four were rushed to Benaka Hospital in Ujire. One of them is reported to be in critical condition, police said. Police have launched an investigation and no arrests have been reported yet.

Following the incident at Pangal Cross, two groups started abusing and pelting stones on each other. The police tried to pacify the mob, but when it showed signs of escalation, they resorted to a mild lathicharge to disperse them. The Special Investigation Team was formed after the Karnataka Women's Commission chairperson Naga-lakshmi Choudhary, several members from civil societies and lawyers demanded an investigation into the allegation of mass burial of people in Dharmasthala. There were allegations that "powerful people" were behind the murder of girls and young women, which prompted the state government to form an SIT. *—PTI*

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SC relief to DMK over scheme names

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Supreme Court on Wednesday overturned a Madras High Court order that barred the Tamil Nadu government from using Chief Minister MK Stalin's name and photos in state welfare schemes. The top court termed the plea by AIADMK leader C Ve Shanmugam against the "Ungaludan Stalin" outreach programme as "totally misconceived in law" and "an abuse of process."

A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai imposed Rs 10 lakh costs on Shanmugam, to be paid to the state government within a week, warning non-compliance would attract contempt. The court emphasised that political disputes should be settled by voters, not courts. The Supreme Court transferred the plea from the high court and dismissed it, noting that many states run welfare schemes named after political leaders, including previous AIADMK schemes named "Amma." The Madras High Court had earlier restrained the government from naming new schemes after living people. *—PTI*

Rescue operations of flood-hit areas affected after in Uttarkashi on Wednesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

2 MARITIME BILLS PASSED BY LS & RS

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

In a landmark move, both Houses of Parliament passed two key maritime bills on the same day amid Opposition protests, marking a first for the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways. The Rajya Sabha approved the century-old colonial-era Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025, while the Lok Sabha passed the Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024.

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal hailed the event as historic, reflecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to modernise India's maritime sector. He said the legislations will create a modern, efficient, and internationally aligned maritime governance framework, enhancing ease of doing business and preparing India's shipping industry for the future.

This approval underlines the commitment to reform and boost the country's maritime infrastructure. *—PTI*

>>>More on Page 3

PHONES IN POCKETS A HAZARD

Laptops on lap cause male infertility: Study

KOLKATA, 6 AUG

A joint five-year study by Calcutta University's Genetics Research Unit and the Institute of Reproductive Medicine (IRM), Kolkata, has found that prolonged use of laptops on the lap and storing mobile phones in trouser pockets may significantly increase the risk of male infertility and impotence.

Led by Professor Sujay Ghosh (CU), with Dr Ratna Chattopadhyay and others from IRM and CU, the study focused on 1,200 men aged 20–40 with idiopathic male infertility (of unknown cause), excluding cases involving female infertility or anatomical defects.

Participants completed detailed lifestyle questionnaires, followed by semen and blood sample testing. Using next-generation sequencing, researchers identified several gene mutations linked to impaired self-repair mechanisms.

The study revealed that frequent lower-body exposure to laptops and phones creates high-intensity electromagnetic fields and heat, damaging testicular tissue and killing sperm-producing cells. The impact was found to be significantly worse in men carrying specific genetic mutations.

"Young men, the heaviest users of such gadgets, are most vulnerable," said Ghosh. "Living systems have repair mechanisms, but natural genetic mutations can disable them, increasing risk." The team urged caution, recommending judicious gadget use and healthier lifestyles to preserve male fertility. *—PTI*

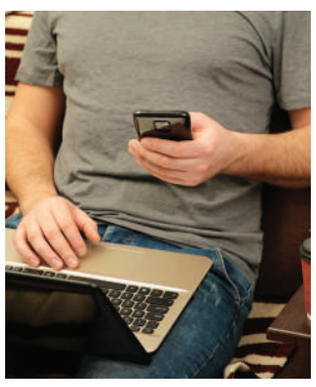

PHOTO: FREEPIK

1 body found, 11 Army men missing after U'khand flood

UTTARAKASHI, 6 AUG

A body was recovered and 150 people rescued from the flood-ravaged mountain village of Dharali on Wednesday as the search for the missing continued amid huge challenges, including incessant rain.

Landslides blocked arterial roads leading up to Dharali where dozens of people were trapped and many homes and cars swept away by the raging waters on Tuesday. Eleven Army personnel from the nearby camp in Harsil were among those missing.

Meanwhile, a 28-member group of tourists, natives of Kerala, who had gone missing were found safe on Wednesday.

Four people are suspected to have been killed in the disaster that struck the ecologically fragile area following what officials described as a cloudburst on Tuesday afternoon. At least half of Dharali was buried under the fast-flowing mudslide of slush, rubble, and water. The village is the main stopover on the way to Gangotri, from where the Ganga originates. *—PTI*

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PHOTO: SALAR

HM celebrates B'day at Tirupati

Home Minister G Parameshwara visited Tirupati on Wedesday on his 74th birthday with his wife and others

Dinesh writes back to Nadda, defends discontinuing JAKs

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao defended the State government's decision to discontinue Jan Aushadhi Kendras operating within government hospital premises, saying the move is intended to ensure the free and assured supply of essential medicines to patients and to reduce their out-of-pocket expenditure.

Rao's clarification came after Union Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda wrote to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah regarding the closure of JAKs within government hospitals in State.

In a letter addressed to Nadda on 5 August, Rao stated that the State government is committed to the free supply of all essential medicines, as listed in the Essential Medicines List (EML), across government healthcare institutions. ***—PTI***

Woman hacked to death in Belagavi

BELAGAVI, 6 AUG

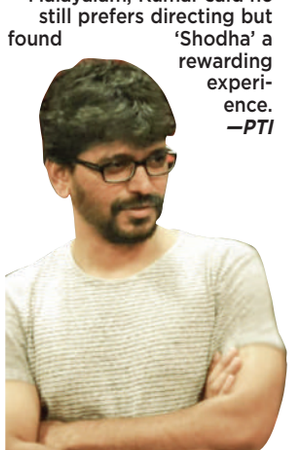
A woman was found murdered on a road near Lakshmi complex on APMC road in Belagavi late night on Tuesday. Police arrested the suspect in 12 hours who hacked to death the woman for not repaying the hand loan he had owed her in assured time. Police have identified the dead as Mahadevi Karennavar from Vaddarwadi in Ramnagar area. The 45-year-old woman was hacked to death with a sharp weapon. She was working as a cook in a hotel near Kolhapur cross and was going home after the work when she was attacked. The place where she was murdered was close to her house. She was residing in a rented house with her son.

—Salar News

'Lucia' director to act in Kannada web series

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Acclaimed filmmaker Pawan Kumar, best known for 'Lucia' and 'U-Turn', will play the lead role in ZEE5's upcoming Kannada web series 'Shodha', premiering on 22 August. Though Kumar has acted occasionally, this marks his first full-fledged lead role. Directed by Sunil Mysuru, a former assistant on Lucia, the seven-episode series feature a strong ensemble cast. Kumar said he was drawn to the gripping script and the chance to support original Kannada content. He praised ZEE5 for backing regional stories, following its Kannada debut Ayyane Mane. Known for directing acclaimed films in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam, Kumar said he still prefers directing but found 'Shodha' a rewarding experience. ***—PTI***



HC grants interim relief to KJ George in BESCOM graft case

HC says trial court's order not 'permissible'

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

The Karnataka High Court temporarily stayed proceedings against State Energy Minister KJ George and senior Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM) officials in connection with alleged irregularities the tendering process of smart meters. The case, filed by BJP MLAs, alleged that there Rs 16,000 crore scam in the connection with the tendering process of the smart meters.

A Bench of Justice MI Arun passed the interim order on two separate petitions filed by George and former BESCOM managing director Mahantesh Bilagi, and Technical Director Ramesh HJ.

The Court has stayed further trial proceedings until 20 August, when the matter will be heard next.

On 23 July, an Additional Court passed an order for the registration of a private complaint against George, Bilagi, and Ramesh in the matter.

KJ George PHOTO: FB

"Here the trial court has passed an order directing Lokayukta police to submit a report which is not permissible," the High Court said, quashing the lower court's ruling.

BJP leaders, CN Ashwath Narayan, SR Vishwanath, and Dheeraj Muniraj had lodged a complaint accusing George of conspiring with BESCOM officials to manipulate the smart meter tender process.

- BJP leaders had filed a case against the State Energy Minister KJ George and two BESCOM officials saying that the smart meters tender process would favour pre-selected private contractors

The BJP leaders claimed that such tender manipulation had caused losses to the public exchequer and that it unfairly benefited Rajashree Electricals, the contractor chosen to implement the smart meter project. The complainants had claimed that this tender was undervalued, that pre-qualification criteria were diluted during the selection process, and that statutory procurement norms were violated to favour a pre-selected vendor. *—Agencies*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah paid a surprise visit to Victoria Hospital in City on Wednesday, where he interacted with the patients and inspected the facilities PHOTO: X @SIDDARAMAIAH

CM moots expanding Victoria Hospital

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday highlighted the need to increase the capacity of Victoria Hospital as people from across the country seek treatment there.

He paid a surprise visit to the hospital along with Medical Education Minister Sharan Prakash Patil after his tour to Koppal and Raichur was cancelled due to bad weather.

The CM interacted with the patients, including a few from Bihar.

"People from across the country come to Victoria Hospital. There is overcrowding. So there is a need to increase its capacity," Siddaramaiah told reporters.

The CM said that he has asked the medical team to treat patients with compassion.

"Since people are getting free treatment here, there will be too much pressure on the doctors. I have told them to be patient," Siddaramaiah said.

He further said that he had given strict instructions that no one should take even a rupee from patients.

"I noticed that liver transplant in private hospitals costs about Rs 40 lakh to Rs 50 lakh, but here it is done free of cost. The demand is to increase the capacity," Siddaramaiah said.

At present, 120 beds available in the gastroenterology department.

There is a proposal to make it a 300-bed facility, which the government will consider, he added. *—PTI*

D'sthala: SIT revisits forest where bones were found

The SIT revisited a location close to 'Spot 11A', where they previously found several bones, including skull fragments PHOTO: PTI

DHARMASTHALA, 6 AUG

The Special Investigation Team revisited a forested stretch near Dharmasthala on Wednesday in connection with the ongoing probe into the alleged mass burial case, accompanied by the anonymous complainant who had initiated the case.

According to sources, the complainant—a former sanitation worker—led the team deeper into the forest and pointed out a fresh location for inspection.

The site, reportedly marked as "Spot 11A", is located close to an earlier point where skeletal remains were recovered earlier this week.

Heavy machinery and a group of workers were deployed at the site, which the SIT is now treating as significant in its investigation.

Forensic teams are expected to conduct a detailed survey of the area.

SIT officials have remained tight-lipped about the latest developments, saying only that the new location is under close observation.

The complainant, who claimed to have worked in Dharmasthala between 1995 and 2014, has alleged that he was forced to bury multiple bodies—including those of women and minors—some of which showed signs of sexual assault. *—PTI*

THE NEWS MINUTE MOVES HC AGAINST GAG ORDER

Bengaluru, 6 Aug

Spunklane Media Private Limited, which owns web portal The News Minute (TNM), approached the State High Court challenging two separate media gag orders that has been used curb its reporting on the Sowjanya murder case and the Dharmasthala mass burials. The petition alleged the gag orders posed a "serious threat to press freedom". TNM claimed it received notices to take down three stories and a post on X. Although TNM complied with these requests, it received a request to take down another video, which it objected to.

Seer forced to resign after villagers find out he was born Muslim

CHAMARAJANAGAR, 6 AUG

A seer was forced to resign from his position as a head of the State mutt after villagers discovered that he was a Muslim-born individual. The twenty-two-year old man, who now goes by Nijalinga Swamy, was asked to leave the Gurumalleshwara Shakha mutt in Chamarajanagar's Gundlupet taluka, ending a brief six-week tenure.

The controversy reportedly broke when a mutt employee accessed Swamy's old phone and phone his Aadhaar card and photos of him before his initiation, including images of him wearing skull cap and holding a beer bottle. The discovery caused an uproar among some devotees.

However, Nijalinga Swamy denied ever hiding his past. He said that everyone knew about his previous religious identity.

"At a very young age, I was attracted towards Basavanna and his ideas. I used to perform puja just like any Lingayat," he told press. "My parents were frightened and they sent me to a madrassa to study. It gave me another dimension, and at the age of 17, I took deeksha (initiation) to become a Lingayat."

Nijalinga was born in Kalaburagi district and said he remains committed to Basavanna's philosophy and will find shelter at another Lingayat mutt in Haveri district to continue his spiritual work. *—Salar News*

ED attaches Rs 29K for Mangaluru cooker blast case

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached Rs 29,176 under the anti-money laundering law from the bank account of Syed Yasin, an accused in the 2022 Mangaluru cooker bomb blast case. The blast occurred on 19 November, 2022 in an autorickshaw on the outskirts of Mangaluru, injuring the main accused, Mohammed Shariq, who was allegedly carrying the IED.

According to the ED, the bomb was intended to be planted at the Dharmasthala Manjunatha Swamy Temple, but exploded prematurely due to a timer error. The case, linked to the banned terrorist group ISIS, is part of a broader plan to spread terror and wage war against the Indian government.

Shariq received online training from an ISIS handler known as 'Colonel' via encrypted apps like Wickr and Telegram. Funds were routed through mule accounts and cryptocurrencies, with Yasin and Shariq cashing them via PoS agents. These funds were used to buy bomb-making materials, rent hideouts in Mysuru, and conduct reconnaissance in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala.

The ED is investigating the terror financing network, based on an FIR filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). *—PTI*

BELAGAVI COPS NAB MAN FOR RAPING GIRL IN PRAYER HOUSE

BELAGAVI, 6 AUG

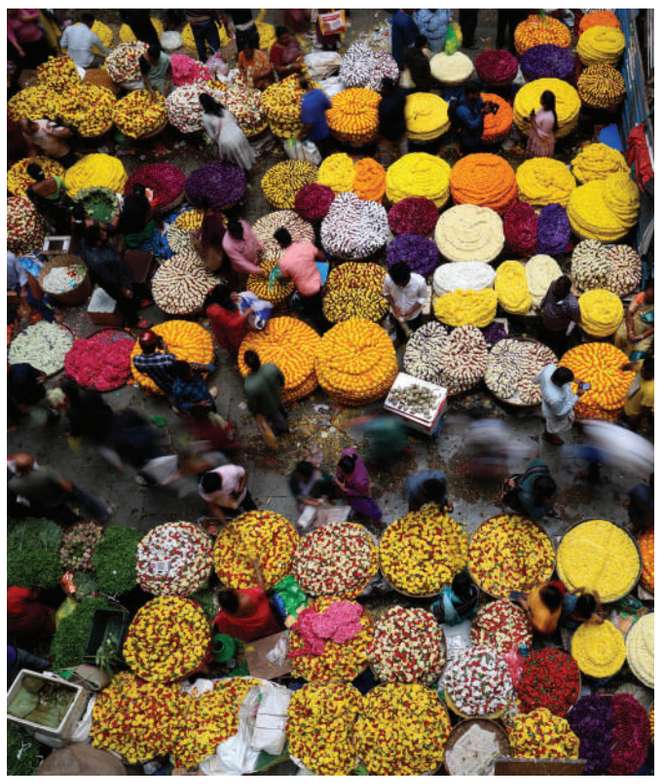
Belagavi police detained a person for allegedly raping a 5-year-old girl in a prayer house in Yaragatti town in the district on Wednesday.

The incident gained traction after a Tuesday post from Hindu Right-wing activist Puneeth Kerehalli. In his post, he said that the girl was raped on 5 October, 2023 but authorities had prevented minor's parents from filing a police case.

Dismissing allegations of a religion based angle, Belagavi Superintendent of Police Bhimashankar Guled said that the accused is also from the same girl's community.

The victim's parents said that they didn't file the complaint because they were worried about the future of their daughter, SP Guled said. A complaint was registered from a Children Development Protection Officer (CDPO) . *—Salar News*

LAKSHMI PUJA PREPARATIONS



Flowers sold ahead of Varamahalakshmi festival, in Bengaluru, on Wednesday. The festival is on 8 August PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD

POST-PAHALGAM

City woman wanted Pak invasion

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Shama Parveen Ansari, arrested by Gujarat ATS from Bengaluru for allegedly promoting Al Qaeda agenda, had appealed to Pakistan Army chief General Asim Munir to invade India during Operation Sindoor to "unify Muslim lands" under "Project Khilafat", officials said.

Ansari was arrested from her residence on 29 July for spreading propaganda of Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), a banned terror outfit.

The ATS on Wednesday said Ansari operated two Facebook pages and an Instagram handle with 10,000 followers to share jihadi and anti-India content.

Shama Parveen Ansari PHOTO: X

On 9 May, two days after India launched Operation Sindoor, Ansari uploaded a post on her FB account appealing Munir to seize the "golden opportunity" to attack India.

In the FB post with Munir's photo, Ansari stated, "You have a golden opportunity... adopt Project Khilafat for the implementation of Islam, unify Muslim lands, and march forward to eliminate Hindutva and Zionism... So march forward."

In an Instagram video, a preacher criticises Indian Muslims for backing the Army.

In another video, Imam of Lahore's Lal Masjid Abdul Aziz speaks about establishing Khilafat System in India through armed revolution.

A third video shows an AQIS leader talking about "Ghazwa-e-Hind" and unleashing violence against the Indian state and Hindus.

According to ATS, Ansari was linked to one of the four people nabbed two weeks ago for allegedly sharing provocative content.

All five have been booked under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. *—PTI*

Now, Congress alleges vote theft in Mysuru

MYSURU, 6 AUG

Karnataka Pradesha Congress Committee (KPCC) spokesperson M Lakshmana alleged that the EVM machines were rigged in the Mysuru Lok Sabha constituency. Lakshmana alleged that his opponent, BJP candidate Yaduveer Wadiyar, won by fraudulent methods, on Wednesday.

Lakshmana stated that the matter requires a deep investigation and that he would discuss the issues with the party leader Rahul Gandhi during the upcoming protest against BJP's manipulation of voters list on 8 August at Freedom Park in City. After the discussion, he will file a complaint with the Chief Election Commissioner of India regarding the "vote theft" in Mysuru. *—PTI*

Bike used by DKS had 34 traffic violations

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

A yellow two-wheeler driven by State Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar during an inspection of the Hebbal flyover loop on 5 August has 34 pending traffic violation cases and a total fine of Rs 18,500, according to the Bengaluru Traffic Police website.

However, Congress sources claimed that the vehicle does not belong to Shivakumar and that he was merely riding it during the inspection.

According to the traffic police website, the vehicle has been booked for multiple violations, including riding without a helmet, using a mobile phone while riding, and entering no-entry or one-way zones.

On Tuesday, Shivakumar shared a video on his X account showing riding the two-wheeler, announcing the opening of the Hebbal flyover loop.

He said the move would ease traffic congestion and ensure smoother and faster commutes, aligning with the State government's efforts to build a "better Bengaluru". *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Jharkhand court grants bail to Rahul Gandhi

CHAIBASA, 6 AUG

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was granted conditional bail by a special MP-MLA court in Chaibasa, Jharkhand, on Wednesday in a defamation case over remarks made against Union Home Minister Amit Shah at a 2018 rally. The case, initially filed in Ranchi, was later shifted to Chaibasa. Gandhi appeared in court as directed by the Jharkhand High Court and was asked to cooperate with proceedings. Gandhi had, on June 2, moved the Jharkhand High Court, challenging the order of the special court here, which had directed him to appear before it on June 26. The case was filed against Gandhi by Pratap Kumar for allegedly making defamatory statements against Shah. *—PTI*

Hinduism is a universal religion: Mohan Bhagwat

NAGPUR, AUG 6

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Wednesday said the conflict-ridden world today needs Hinduism, describing it as a universal religion rooted in nature that embraces diversity. Speaking at the inauguration of the Dharm Jagran Nyas' new building, he said Hinduism teaches unity and acceptance of all differences, adding, "We are not divided by diversity; we are united through it." Bhagwat stated that though it originated in India, Hindu Dharma is a universal creed for humanity. He stressed that religion's duty extends beyond devotion to God it includes responsibility towards society. All spiritual paths lead to the same truth, he said no one should forcefully try to change others' beliefs.*—PTI*

Man held for snatching Cong MP's chain in Delhi

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

A 24-year-old habitual offender was arrested for snatching a gold chain from Congress MP R Sudha during her morning walk near Tamil Nadu Bhavan in Delhi's high-security Chanakyapuri area. The accused, Sohan Rawat alias Buggu, fled on a stolen scooter wearing a full-face helmet. He was traced using CCTV footage, technical surveillance, and local intelligence, and apprehended near Pushpa Bhawan. Police recovered the 30.90g gold chain, four stolen mobile phones, and two stolen vehicles. Rawat, previously involved in 26 theft and snatching cases, was out on bail since June. Known for disguises and shifting hideouts, he had been arrested as recently as April. Police plan to seek cancellation of his bail due to his repeat offences. *—PTI*

Oppn suggests debate on 'electoral reforms' in Parl

Rijiju says can't discuss sub-judice matter in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Opposition has proposed allowing a discussion on "electoral reforms" as a "middle path" to end the deadlock in Parliament over the demand for a debate on the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

The government has not yet responded to the proposal.

However, the ruling side is unlikely to accede to any such debate.

Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju stressed that rules of the Lok Sabha do not allow sub-judice matters to be discussed in the House. The functioning of autonomous institutions such as the Election Commission could not be discussed there.

Meanwhile, Congress general secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh the party's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi's post, which claimed that Parliament

There has been a logjam in Parliament over the SIR in Bihar, which the Opposition has alleged is being done to disenfranchise a large number of voters ahead of the state election to help the ruling combine.

INDIA bloc parties wanted a discussion in Parliament on SIR as it is important to protect the voting rights of all Indians, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said.

Kharge claimed that minorities, Dalits and adivasis are facing the risk of losing their voting rights.

"We want discussion on SIR of electoral rolls in Bihar but the government is unwilling," the Congress president said.

"We have been urging the speaker, chairman and the government that the voting rights of people should not be stolen....," he said.

Union Minister Kiren Rijiju speaks in the Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session of Parliament in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Referring to the statements that the functioning of the Election Commission cannot be discussed in Parliament as it is an independent constitutional body, Kharge said everything under the sun can be discussed. *—PTI*

Tavel insurance for public at 45 paisa

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Passengers can avail Optional Travel Insurance Scheme while purchasing e-tickets by paying a premium of 45 paisa, inclusive of all taxes, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The Optional Travel Insurance Scheme is available only to confirmed/RAC passengers who have booked their tickets online. *—PTI*

Oppn wants JPC to check Sports Bill

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Leaders of several opposition parties on Wednesday urged Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to refer the National Sports Governance Bill, 2025 and the National Anti-Doping (Amendment) Bill, 2025 to a joint committee of Parliament for further scrutiny. The leaders said the bills propose wide-ranging reforms in the governance, regulation, and ethical oversight of sports in India.They have serious implications for sportspersons, sports federations and India's standing in international sporting bodies. *—PTI*

2 new bills to modernise maritime laws

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Merchant Shipping Bill, 2024, passed by the Lok Sabha, replaces the outdated 1958 Act with a comprehensive, future-ready framework aligned with global maritime standards. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal highlighted that the old Act, with 561 sections, was bulky and fragmented, failing to address modern challenges or fully implement India's International Maritime Organization (IMO) obligations.

The new Bill contains 16 parts and 325 clauses, enhancing safety at sea, environmental protection, emergency response, and seafarer welfare. It also promotes Indian tonnage and reduces compliance burdens, aiming to position India as a respected global maritime jurisdiction that attracts sustainable growth and innovation.

Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha approved the Carriage of Goods by Sea Bill, 2025, which repeals the century-old 1925 Act. Introduced by Union Minister of State Shantanu Thakur, the Bill adopts the internationally recognised Hague-Visby Rules, simplifying maritime trade laws and reducing litigation risks. This legislation forms part of the government's broader effort to discard colonial-era laws and improve ease of doing business. Members raised concerns about maritime security and smuggling during Rajya Sabha debates, which the government assured are being addressed. *—PTI*

UNION TERRITORY STATUS

Omar writes to parties to restore J&K's statehood

SRINAGAR, 6 AUG

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said he has written to several parties with a sizeable presence in Parliament, seeking their support for the introduction of a bill for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood in the ongoing Monsoon session.

The Centre abrogated Article 370, which accorded a special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, on 5 August 2019, and divided it into two union territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

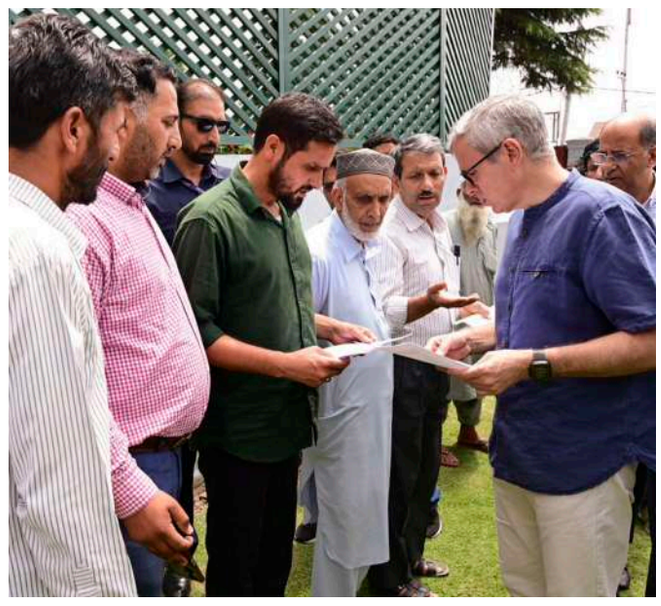
The CM's outreach comes amidst a growing demand for the return of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. His push is a renewed effort to hold the Centre accountable for its commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Abdullah wrote a letter to the presidents of 42 political parties urging them to press the Centre to bring a legislation in the Monsoon session to restore statehood the state, saying it must be viewed as an essential course correction.

He wrote that downgrading a state to a union territory sets a "profound and unsettling" precedent and is a "constitutional red line" that "must never be crossed".

The chief minister said the reorganisation of the state into a union territory was presented as a "temporary and transitional measure" and cited repeated public assurances from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, including a recent promise in Kashmir.

Abdullah also cited the Centre's stand before the Supreme Court reaffirming its long-pending commitment to restore statehood. *—PTI*



Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during a meeting with delegation members, in Srinagar *PHOTO: PTI*

Didi cries war against BJP over attack on Bengalis

JHARGRAM, 6 AUG

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday led a massive rally in Jhargram, protesting alleged attacks on Bengali-speaking migrants and accusing BJP of harassing Bengalis under the guise of citizenship checks and voter list revisions.

Questioning the Assam government's authority, Banerjee asked, "What right does Assam have to send NRC notices to people of Bengal?"

Addressing a large gathering in the tribal heartland, the Trinamool Congress Chief claimed BJP was undermining the Bengali language and identity. "They are saying there is no language called Bengali. I will expose them before the world. If you attack Bengali language and Bengal's people, I will not stay silent," she declared.

Criticising the ongoing Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, Banerjee said, "They are trying to make a BJP list, not a voter list. Not a single elector should be omitted. It is covert attempt to implement the National Register of Citizens." *—PTI*

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee along with supporters take part in 'Bhasha Andolan' rally, in Jhargram *PHOTO: PTI*

'Indigenous' people in Assam can now get guns

GUWAHATI, 6 AUG

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a portal for indigenous citizens in "sensitive" areas to apply for arms licences. Eligibility includes being an original inhabitant and facing a genuine threat due to local vulnerability. Residents of notified remote areas —such Dhubri, Morigaon, Barpeta, Nagaon, South Salmara-Mankachar, Rupahi, Dhing, and Jania — are covered. These regions have significant Muslim populations. Applications will undergo security assessment and multi-layered scrutiny before approval. *—PTI*

T'gana CM leads protest over BC quota bills

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy led a protest at Jantar Mantar on Wednesday, demanding Presidential assent for the state's Backward Classes (BC) reservation bills. He accused the BJP-led Centre of stalling the legislation due to its "anti-OBC" stance.

Passed in March, the two bills seek to enhance OBC reservation to 42% in education, jobs, and local bodies. Though approved by the governor, they await Presidential assent.

Reddy accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of opposing OBC rights, saying, "We are pro-OBC, Rahul Gandhi is pro-OBC, but Modi is anti-OBC." He claimed the Centre was undermining a democratically elected state government and ignoring the caste census approved by the Telangana Cabinet.

BJP alleged Congress was diverting part of the quota to Muslims under the guise of BC reservation. Reddy dismissed this as a "political stunt" and reaffirmed Congress's commitment to social justice.Congress leaders Vijayashanti and Jothimani Sennimalai backed the protest, calling OBCs the "backbone of the country" and comparing Telangana's move to Tamil Nadu over 50 per cent reservation model. *—PTI*

Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy with other leaders during a protest demanding Presidential assent for the two bills passed by the state legislature to increase reservation for backward classes to 42 % in education, employment, and local bodies in the state, at Jantar Mantar, in New Delhi on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

BJP to file contempt plea against Priyanka

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

BJP announced on Wednesday it will file a contempt petition against Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra following her comments on the Supreme Court's recent observations about Rahul Gandhi. The ruling party alleged that Priyanka's remarks amounted to a "direct challenge" to the court's authority and urged the apex court to take suo-motu cognisance.

The controversy arose after the Supreme Court reprimanded Rahul Gandhi for his remarks on the Indian Army, stating, "If you are a true Indian, you wouldn't say such a thing." Priyanka Gandhi responded by saying it was not for judges to decide who is a "true Indian."

BJP IT cell head Amity Malaviya condemned Priyanka's comments, calling them a "brazen defiance" and "contempt for the judiciary." She demanded the court intervene, citing a recent instance when the Supreme Court reprimanded BJP MP Nishikant Dubey for his statement that the "Supreme Court is taking the country towards anarchy." Dubey urged the court to take action against her. *—PTI*

CENTRAL VISTA PROJECT

Bureaucrats get yoga rooms, cafés at new Kartavya Bhavan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurated Kartavya Bhavan, the first of the 10 upcoming Common Central Secretariat (CCS) buildings, under the government's Central Vista redevelopment project to house the bureaucracy.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the inauguration of Kartavya Bhavan 3, in New Delhi, on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

COST

It will bring all ministries and departments under one roof.

₹3,141.99 crore

KEY FEATURES

Built-up area: 1.5 lakh sqm

Basement: 40,000 sqm

Parking for 600 cars

7-storey building has:

- Creche, yoga room, medical room.
- Café & kitchen. Multipurpose hall.

MEETING & CONFERENCE FACILITIES

- 24 conference rooms (45 seats each).
- 26 small conference rooms (25 seats each).
- 67 meeting rooms.
- 27 lifts.

IT WILL HOUSE:

- Home Affairs.
- External Affairs.
- Rural Development.
- MSME.
- DoPT.
- Petroleum & Natural Gas ministries.
- Principal Scientific Adviser's office.
- Some of these ministries are currently in building that are 70 to 80 years old, which are deemed structurally outdated.

9 MORE BUILDING TO COME UP UNDER THE CENTRAL VISTA PLAN

- **CCS 1 & 2:** To be completed by next month.
- **CCS 10:** Completion by April 2026.
- **CCS 6 & 7:** Ready by October 2026.

WHAT'S NEXT? AN EXECUTIVE ENCLAVE CONSTRUCTION UNDERWAY WILL INCLUDE:

- New office for the prime minister.
- Cabinet secretariat.
- India House.
- National security council secretariat.
- Construction of the new Prime Minister's residence.

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT THE KARTAVYA BHAVAN?

It is designed to use 30% less energy. It has double-glazed facades, solar water heating and rainwater harvesting. It also has smart lights. To further focus on waste management, the facility will have zero-discharge waste management and in-house solid waste processing.

Vantara proposes rehab centre for Kolhapur jumbo

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Vantara, the Jamnagar-based animal rehabilitation centre, has proposed setting up a satellite facility at Nandani in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district for elephant Madhuri (also known as Mahadevi), in coordination with state government and the Jain math. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis confirmed Vantara's support for state's Supreme Court petition seeking Madhuri's return to the math. The proposed centre will include hydrotherapy, laser treatment, swimming ponds, and a night shelter, in line with SC-appointed committee recommendations. Vantara clarified its role was purely under court direction and expressed regret if distress was caused. The elephant was moved to Vantara after Bombay HC cited concerns over her health. Thousands recently protested demanding her return. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA

India's Western Hoolock Gibbon under threat

GUWAHATI, 6 AUG

The endangered Western Hoolock Gibbon, India's only ape, is facing local extinction in fragmented forest patches of Northeast India, warns primatologist Dr Dilip Chetry. Habitat loss from encroachment, infrastructure projects, tea plantations, shifting cultivation, hunting, and wildlife trafficking are driving the decline. Found only south of the Brahmaputra and east of the Dibang river across seven northeastern states, the species is now critically threatened. Speaking after the International Primatological Society Congress in Madagascar, Chetry urged the Indian government to launch a national-level 'Project Gibbon', with state-wise action plans and dedicated funding. He called for conservation steps, including restoring degraded habitats, ecological corridors and staff training. *—PTI*

Mumbai woman duped of Rs 8L over '786' currency

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

A 49-year-old woman from Mazgaon, south Mumbai, was duped of over Rs 8.4 lakh after fraudsters promised Rs 6 lakh each for a Rs100 note with the serial number '786' and a 25 paise coin featuring a one-horned rhinoceros. An avid collector, she had responded to a Facebook advertisement claiming high returns for rare currency. The scammers asked her to pay registration fees, GST, and other charges, supposedly required to process the deal. Trusting the offer, she made several payments to bank accounts provided by the culprits. When no money was received, she filed a complaint. Police have registered a case under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and IT Act and are investigating. *—PTI*

Rave party case: SC stays trail against Elvish Yadav

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed proceedings in the trial court against YouTuber Elvish Yadav in the snake venom case. The court issued notice to the Uttar Pradesh government and the complainant Gaurav Gupta on the plea filed by Yadav challenging the chargesheet and criminal proceedings against him in the case.The top court heard Yadav's appeal against Allahabad High Court's order that dismissed his plea. The chargesheet alleges consumption of snake venom as a recreational drug at "rave" parties by people, including foreigners. Yadav was arrested in 2024. His counsel had argued that no snakes, narcotic or psychotropic substances were recovered from him and no causal link established between Yadav and the co-accused. *—PTI*

Parties calls for plan to save U'khand mountains

They blame the Char Dham project in eco-sensitive zones

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Politicians across party lines on Wednesday expressed grief over the devastation caused by flash floods in Uttarkashi, calling for a national strategy to prevent such disasters in the Himalayan region.

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra termed the incident "extremely tragic" and stressed the need for long-term planning. "Every year, whether it's Himachal, Uttarakhand, or Wayanad, we witness such disasters. We need a comprehensive strategy. In Wayanad, political parties and administration worked together for early evacuation. If we can do it there, why not everywhere?" she said at Parliament.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav echoed the sentiment, calling for a revival of socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia's vision to save the Himalayas and its rivers. "The entire hill region is witnessing repeated destruction. We must unite and act."

Congress MP Ranjeet Ranjan blamed unregulated construction in eco-sensitive zones, particularly under the Centre's Char Dham Yatra highway project. "Last session, we flagged concerns over road widening in vulnerable zones like Dharali, near the Bhagirathi River. This is a man-made calamity," she said, claiming locals estimate 200–400 people, including jawans, are still missing.

"This is not just about relief. The government must introspect why these landslides are recurring," Ranjan added.

Congress MP Rajeev Shukla urged the Centre to create a unified package for flood victims and implement strict regulations. "No houses or hotels should be permitted along riverbanks. Just like a 500-metre buffer zone exists along coastlines, similar thinking should apply here."

Over 130 people have been rescued, but many remain missing amid challenging weather. One man that he had not heard from his brother's family since Tuesday. *—PTI*

SDRF personnel conduct rescue operations in flood-hit Dharali of Uttarkashi district, in Uttarakhand **PHOTO: PTI**

LANDSLIDES CUT OFF 600 ROADS IN HP

Heavy rain led to the closure of 617 roads, including four national highways, and educational and in parts of Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday. The Kinnaur Kailash Yatra was suspended. Pilgrims were safely sheltered at Milling Khata and Gufa. Road closures led to traffic jams at several places in the state. *–PTI*

UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Water seepage poses threat to Ellora paintings

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 6 AUG

Water seepage in Cave 32 at the world-famous Ellora cave complex in the district has put the ninth century frescoes inside in danger, an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) official said on Wednesday.

The seepage started naturally and a similar problem had been observed last year too.

The Ellora cave complex, 30 kilometers away from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, is a UNESCO world heritage site. It consists of a group of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist caves.

A tourist guide who recently visited the Jain cave no 32 said some work was carried out when a similar problem was noticed last year. "But more work is needed to stop the seepage as it can damage the paintings," he said.

An ASI official said, "The seepage has developed naturally. We have written to the conservation section earlier to address this issue. A review will be conducted."

An inspection was conducted earlier to find the source of the seepage, but it was difficult to pinpoint because the area is large.

Swapnil Joshi, co-convenor of the heritage organisation INTACH, said, "Ellora is different from Ajanta caves. In Ellora, there are very few caves with such paintings.... We have written to the ASI earlier. If water is still coming down, it has to be dealt with at the earliest." *—PTI*

The Ellora Caves in Maharashtra comprises of a group of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain caves. The frescos inside the Cave 23, which date back to the 9th century, need to be preserved against decay **PHOTO: WIKI COMMONS**

TN cop hacked to death while solving dispute

TIRUPPUR, 6 AUG

A Special Sub Inspector of Tamil Nadu police was hacked to death when he attempted to resolve a dispute between a man and the latter's son in Gudimangalam in the district.

M Shanmugavel, 57, a special sub-inspector at Gudimangalam police station in Tiruppur district, and Armed Reserve Police constable Azhaguraja, rushed to a private farm upon receiving information about a drunken brawl between two persons.

They tried to pacify the two, but the police official was attacked with a sickle and the constable chased away.

Though Manigandan was suspected to have caused grievous injuries to the SSI, his brother Thangapandian and their father Moorthy were also involved in the attack.

While Shanmugavel died on the spot, the constable managed to escape a bid on his life.

A manhunt was launched to nab Moorthy, who had two criminal offences pending against him and his two sons: Manigandan and Thangapandi, who had four cases pending against them.

Chief Minister MK Stalin expressed his grief over the death of the police officer. He ordered the police to arrest the culprits. He also announced a compensation of Rs one crore for the officer's family. *—PTI*

Health concerns: Mumbaikars defy HC order to feed pigeons

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Protesters on Wednesday removed a tarpaulin placed by the municipal corporation over the kabutarkhana (pigeon feeding station) in Dadar, Mumbai, following a Bombay High Court order mandating closure of such sites due to public health concerns.

Members of the Jain community, for whom feeding pigeons is a sacred tradition, clashed with police during the incident. Mumbai Suburban Guardian Minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha, who later visited the site, condemned the protest and said police would take appropriate action.

He stated the local Jain temple trust denied involvement, attributing the unrest to outsiders.

The High Court had recently ordered the closure of kabutarkhanas over issues such as respiratory problems caused by pigeon droppings.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis directed the civic body to implement controlled feeding and ensure cleanliness. Cultural Affairs Minister Ashish Shelar also supported regulated feedings of the pigeons in the city. *—PTI*

A man stands next to a 'kabutarkhana' (pigeon feeding area), covered in sheets by Bombay Municipla Corporation at Dadar in Mumbai **PHOTO: PTI**

UP Jama Masjid committee's head booked

SAMBHAL, 6 AUG

A case has been registered against the chairman of the Shahi Jama Masjid Management Committee and several others for allegedly holding a celebratory procession in Sambhal following his release from prison, police said on Wednesday.

An FIR was lodged at Sambhal Kotwali police station on Tuesday based on a complaint by Sub-Inspector Ashish Tomar. Zafar Ali, the committee chairman, along with Sarfaraz, Tahir, Haider and 50 to 60 unidentified persons, has been accused of violating prohibitory orders.

Ali was imprisoned in connection with violent clashes during a survey of the mosque, which left four dead and 29 police officers injured. *—PTI*

Ganga blessing you: UP neta tells woman in flood-hit area

LUCKNOW, 6 AUG

- The remark triggered sharp reactions from opposition leaders, who accused the minister of being insensitive to the plight of those affected.

Uttar Pradesh Fisheries Minister Sanjay Nishad has sparked controversy during his visit to a flood-affected area in Kanpur Dehat where he told a woman that the Ganga river has reached "your doorstep to clean your feet".

The remark triggered sharp reactions from opposition leaders, who accused the minister of being insensitive to the plight of those affected by floods.

Several districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Kanpur, Prayagraj, and Varanasi, have been affected by rising water levels of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers in recent days.

In a video that surfaced on social media on Tuesday, Nishad can be seen speaking to a local woman standing in floodwaters and saying, "Ganga river reaches your door steps to clean your feet and this will take you directly to heaven."

After the minister's statement during his visit on Monday, the woman was heard "saying in the viral video, Take the blessing of Ganga yourself".

It was not clear whether the woman was replying to the minister or talking to another woman present there.Nishad, who heads NISHAD party said the remark was made in a lighter vein. *—PTI*

Bihar honour killing: Man killed by father-in-law

DARBHANGA, 6 AUG

A 25-year-old man was allegedly shot dead at the Darbhanga Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) in Bihar by his father-in-law in a suspected case of "honour killing", police said on Wednesday.

Rahul Kumar, 25, a second-year nursing student of DMCH, was shot dead by his father-in-law Premshankar Jha on Tuesday evening, they said. Rahul's classmates thrashed Jha so badly that he had to sent to a hospital in Patna in a critical conditon, they said. Rahul, a resident of Supaul, got married to Jha's daughter, who also studies at DMCH, in April. *—PTI*

NATIONAL HANDLOOM DAY

On the eve of National Handloom Day, a woman is seen working on a traditional handloom in Thiruvananthapuram. The handloom sector is the largest cottage sector in India, employing millions **PHOTO: PTI**

SETS WORLD RECORD

Woman donates 300 litres breast milk

TAMIL NADU, 6 AUG

A 33-year-old homemaker from Kattur in Tiruchirappalli district here has donated over 300 litres of breast milk, helping save the lives of thousands of premature and critically ill infants, officials said.

Selva Brindha, a mother of two, donated a total of 300.17 litres over 22 months—from April 2023 to February 2025—to the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Government Hospital (MGMGH) Milk Bank.

Her contribution accounted for nearly half of the total breast milk collected by the milk bank during the 2023-24 period, a hospital official said.

"It was hard initially. I lost weight and was subjected to scepticism over my decision to provide milk to premature and critically ill babies. But I gathered information that pumping milk helps in losing weight and does not hamper the health in any manner. Then I decided to carry on my mission,"Brinda said.

Brinda first decided to donate her milk in 2023 when her infant daughter was admitted in a neonatal intensive care unit of a hospital. There she saw how infant ill babies had to depend on breastmilk provided by donor to survive. This touched her deeply and stirred her maternal instincts.

After making sure that she fed her daughter, she started extracting milk for other babies.

Encouraged by a non-governmental organisation, Brindha's consistent service earned her a place in both the 'Asia Book of Records' and the 'India Book of Records'.

In recognition of her remarkable contribution, officials at the milk bank will felicitate her during the valedictory session of the 'World Breastfeeding Week' on 7 August. *—PTI/Agencies*

Selva Brinda donated her breast milk for premature and critically ill infants admitted in hospitals **PHOTO: ANI**

Vijay Deverakonda appears before ED in online betting

HYDERABAD, 6 AUG

Actor Vijay Deverakonda on Wednesday appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) here as part of an investigation into a money laundering case linked to illegal online betting and gambling by certain platforms.

The 'Liger' actor appeared before the officials of the central agency for questioning at its zonal office here.

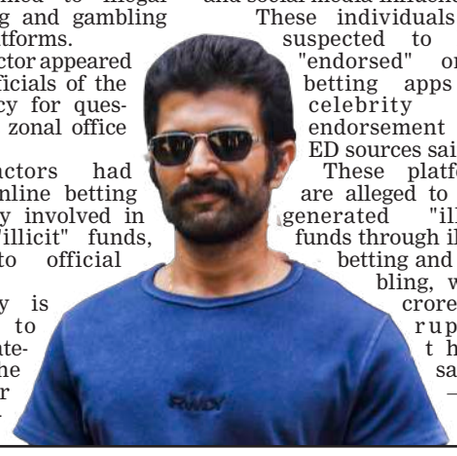
Several actors had "endorsed" online betting apps allegedly involved in generating "illicit" funds, according to official sources..

The agency is expected to record the statements of the actors under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

The ED had taken cognisance of as many as five state police FIRs to register its case against these actors and a number of other celebrities and social media influencers.

These individuals are suspected to have "endorsed" online betting apps for celebrity or endorsement fee, ED sources said.

These platforms are alleged to have generated "illicit" funds through illegal betting and gambling, worth crores of rupees, they said. *—PTI*



An idol of Lord Shiva partially submerged in swollen Ganga river after monsoon rains, at Parmarth Niketan Ghat in Rishikesh, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Experts: Data doesn't back Uttarkashi cloudburst claim

A cloudburst in the upper catchment of the Kheer Ganga river is widely believed to have triggered the flash flood in Uttarkashi's Dharali, but experts feel the amount of rain the Uttarkashi district received on Tuesday was not enough for it to be termed a "cloudburst".

"Data available with us does not reflect the occurrence of a cloudburst," Rohit Thapliyal, a scientist with the India Meteorological Department (IMD), told PTI.

He explained that Uttarkashi received only 27mm of rain on Tuesday, "which is too little for a cloudburst or flash flood of such devastating intensity".

Asked what could have been the reason for the flash flood if not a cloudburst, he said it was a subject of research. "Only after detailed research can anything be definitively said about what led to the flash flood," he said.

"All I can say is the data available with the meteorological department confirms there was no cloudburst", Thapliyal said.

Counted among the most devastating natural disasters in the Indian Himalayas, a cloudburst causes an enormous amount of rainfall across a limited area within an extremely short span of time.

According to the IMD, rain falling at a rate of over 100mm an hour with strong winds and lightning across 20-30 square kilometres of area is termed a cloudburst.

However, in a 2023 paper, researchers from IIT-Jammu and National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, define cloudburst as a "sudden downpour of rainfall in a range of 100-250mm an hour in a short span covering a smaller spatial extent similar to one square kilometre".

It is not just the amount of rainfall. DP Dobhal, a former scientist at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology, also said the possibility of a cloudburst at an altitude like that is too thin.

"The heights from where the sludge came rushing down the slopes fall in the Alpine region where the possibility of a cloudburst is minimal," Dobhal told PTI.

"Most likely it was an ice chunk falling, a rockfall or a huge landslide which mobilised the moraine deposits in the narrow stream, causing the flash flood," the former scientist said.

However, the precise cause of the disaster will be known only after a scientific analysis is done of the satellite images of the event that caused such devastation in Dharali, he said.

Satellite images have been requested from the Indian Space Research Organisation to clearly ascertain the causes of the Uttarkashi disaster. Officials said that the Uttarakhand Space Application Centre has issued a request letter to ISRO in this matter.

Work underway to restore a collapsed portion of a road, near Bhatwari in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

A study published last month in the Journal of the Geological Society of India has confirmed a sharp rise in extreme rainfall and surface runoff events in Uttarakhand after 2010.

The research, led by Professor Sundriyal, shows that while 1998-2009 saw warming and low rainfall, the trend reversed post-2010, with central and western Uttarakhand witnessing more extreme precipitation events.

The state's geology compounds its risk.

Steep slopes, young and fragile formations prone to erosion and tectonic faults such as the Main Central Thrust make the terrain unstable. The orographic effect of the Himalayas forces moist air upwards, leading to intense localised rainfall, while unstable slopes magnify the risk of landslides and flash floods.

A November 2023 study published in the Natural Hazards journal, analysing disaster data between 2020 and 2023, recorded 183 incidents in Uttarakhand during the monsoon months alone. Landslides accounted for 34.4 per cent of these, flash floods 26.5 per cent and cloudbursts 14 per cent.

The Centre for Science and Environment's Atlas on Weather Disasters shows that between January 2022 and March 2025, the 13 Himalayan states and Union territories reported extreme weather events on 822 days, claiming 2,863 lives.

Experts say these natural factors are worsened by human activity. Unregulated road-building, deforestation and construction of tourism infrastructure and settlements on unstable slopes or riverbanks have increased disaster risk. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار

Himalayas land features causing disaster: IIT study

Flash floods in the Himalayas are primarily influenced by the region's land features, while those occurring along the west coast and in central India are driven by factors that affect water flow, a map of hotspots across the country developed by researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar shows.

Three-fourths of flash floods occurring across the country are triggered due to extreme rainfall and moist conditions of the ground caused by recent, prolonged rains, the study published in the journal 'npj Natural Hazards' found. The remaining one-fourth is solely driven by extreme rainfall, it said.

The extreme weather event is highly local, in terms of area impacted, and spans a short duration between when rainfall starts and when flooding peaks, which is usually under six hours, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

A key finding of the hotspot analysis, the team said, was that extreme rainfall is becoming more common and intense in several basins not prone to flash floods, "highlighting that the warming climate can lead to newer flash flood hotspots in the future".

The map, described in the study, also identifies the risk emerging in sub-basins that are currently less vulnerable to flash floods.

"Flash flood hotspots are mainly centred in the Himalayas, West Coast, and Central India, with geomorphological factors driving flash floods in the Himalayas and hydrological factors (flashiness) in the West Coast and Central India," the authors wrote.

An excavator being used to clear debris from a road following flash floods in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand **PHOTO: PTI**

They added, "The combination of extreme precipitation and wet antecedent conditions triggers most (nearly 3/4th) flash floods while the remaining (nearly 1/4th) are solely driven by extreme precipitation."

The study analysed data of temperatures recorded by the IMD during 1981-2020, and that of flash floods from datasets, including the 'Emergency Events Database' (EM-DAT).

The datasets are said to explicitly categorise flash floods, distinguishing them from other flood types and are therefore essential for analysing the occurrence of the events across the Indian sub-continent, the team said.

The researchers noted that most flash floods in India result from extreme rainfall that occurs over the 18 hours leading up to when water flow peaks.

However, only a fourth of the events are directly a result of extreme rainfall, the team said.

This highlights that wet ground conditions and prolonged rainfall play a crucial role in the occurrence of flash floods, the authors said.

The land surface features of the Indian Himalayas make the region particularly vulnerable to unusual and extreme weather events, such as cloudbursts, extreme precipitation, flash floods, and avalanches.

The risk of these events has been increasing recently, which scientists attribute to human-caused climate change.

On Tuesday, a cloudburst in Uttarkhand's Uttarkashi district triggered flash floods that claimed the lives of at least four people, severely impacting around half of the high-altitude villages in Dharali.

Approximately 130 individuals have been evacuated to safety as rescue operations continue in the area, according to officials. *—PTI*

NDRF and Uttarakhand SDRF personnel rescue people stranded after the pedestrian path to Kedarnath Dham was blocked by debris falling from the hill above, in Rudraprayag district **PHOTO: PTI**

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Kedarnath to Dharali: U'khand's unheeded warnings and disasters

The death and destruction left behind by the flash floods in the Kheer Ganga river in Dharali resurrected painful memories for Geeta, a survivor of the 2013 Kedarnath disaster, who lost four family members in that tragedy, India's worst since the 2004 tsunami.

"The same thing happened in Kedarnath," she exclaimed as visuals played out on a television at a house in New Delhi where she now works as a domestic help.

The 2013 disaster was triggered by more than 300mm of rain in 24 hours as an early intense monsoon surge interacted with a western disturbance. The extreme rainfall, combined with rapid snowmelt, breached the moraine dam of Chorabari Lake, unleashing massive floods that killed around 5,700 people.

Scarred by the tragedy, Geeta (now 45 years old) and her family migrated to Delhi to rebuild their lives. But each time a hits the Himalayan state, it revives those haunting memories for her. Over the past 12 years, a series of disasters have underscored the fragility of the Himalayan terrain.

On 18 August, 2019, a cloudburst in Tikochi and Makudi villages in Uttarkashi's Arakot region triggered flash floods and landslides, killing at least 19 people and affecting 38 villages.

In February 2021, the collapse of a hanging glacier caused a debris flow in the Ronti Gad stream, a tributary of Rishiganga, sweeping away two hydropower projects in Chamoli. Eighty bodies were recovered, and 204 people went missing.

In August the next year, flash floods caused by a cloudburst in the Maldevta-Song-Baldi river system washed away large parts of the Maldevta town near Dehradun, affecting a 15 km stretch.

The Dharali disaster, experts say, shares features with the 2021 Chamoli tragedy.

The 2021 Chamoli disaster impacted an area spanning 20-22 km but did not affect the Alaknanda downstream.

A study published last month in the Journal of the Geological Society of India has confirmed a sharp rise in extreme rainfall and surface runoff events in Uttarakhand after 2010.

The research, led by Professor Sundriyal, shows that while 1998-2009 saw warming and low rainfall, the trend reversed post-2010, with central and western Uttarakhand witnessing more extreme precipitation events.

"Data from 1970 to 2021 shows a clear increase in extreme rainfall events after 2010," Sundriyal told PTI.

Houses buried under debris following flash floods triggered by a cloudburst, in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand, on Wednesday **PHOTO: PTI**

The state's geology compounds its risk.

Steep slopes, young and fragile formations prone to erosion and tectonic faults such as the Main Central Thrust make the terrain unstable. The orographic effect of the Himalayas forces moist air upwards, leading to intense localised rainfall, while unstable slopes magnify the risk of landslides and flash floods.

A November 2023 study published in the Natural Hazards journal, analysing disaster data between 2020 and 2023, recorded 183 incidents in Uttarakhand during the monsoon months alone. Landslides accounted for 34.4 per cent of these, flash floods 26.5 per cent and cloudbursts 14 per cent.

The Centre for Science and Environment's Atlas on Weather Disasters shows that between January 2022 and March 2025, the 13 Himalayan states and Union territories reported extreme weather events on 822 days, claiming 2,863 lives.

Experts say these natural factors are worsened by human activity. Unregulated road-building, deforestation and construction of tourism infrastructure and settlements on unstable slopes or riverbanks have increased disaster risk.

Environment activist Anoop Nautiyal said repeated tragedies in Kedarnath, Chamoli, Joshimath, Sirobagad, Kwarab, and Yamunotri have not altered Uttarakhand's development trajectory.

"If anything, ecological degradation and haphazard development are accelerating due to flawed policies and projects," he claimed.

Climate campaigner Harjeet Singh described the Uttarkashi tragedy as "a deadly mix of global warming-fuelled monsoon extremes and unscientific, unsustainable construction in the name of development".

The threats are not limited to extreme rainfall and landslides. Climate change is rapidly transforming the region's glaciers, creating new hazards in the form of swelling glacial lakes.

Uttarakhand has more than 1,260 glacial lakes, with 13 identified by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as high risk and five as extremely dangerous. These lakes pose major downstream threats, especially as warming accelerates glacial melt.

The Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology has repeatedly warned about the dangers posed by hanging glaciers and glacial lakes. After the Chamoli disaster, its scientists flagged the role of freeze-thaw cycles in destabilising glaciers.

NDMA's 2020 guidelines on Glacial Lake Outburst Floods called for mapping high-risk lakes, enforcing land-use restrictions and using remote monitoring to track potential breaches.

Similarly, a 2013 review by the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People said unregulated hydropower projects and hill-cutting had amplified risks in the fragile terrain, but its recommendations were ignored.

Despite multiple expert reports, policy and enforcement have failed to match the scale of the threat.

As Uttarakhand reels from yet another disaster, the question remains whether the warnings from scientists will finally be heeded before another tragedy strikes. *—PTI*

Ghana's Defence Chief, 7 others die in chopper crash

ACCRA, 6 AUG

Ghana's government says a helicopter crash killed all eight people on board, including Defence Minister Edward Omane Boamah and Environment Minister Ibrahim Murtala Muhammed. Also among the victims were Alhaji Mohammad Muniru Limuna, Deputy National Security Coordinator and former minister of agriculture, and Samuel Sarpong, Vice Chairman of Mahama's National Democratic Congress (NDC) party. The country's military says the helicopter took off Wednesday morning from the capital, Accra, toward Obuasi in the Ashanti region before it went off the radar. It crashed in the southern Ashanti region of the country, said Julius Debrah, chief of staff to President John Mahama, on Wednesday. *—Agencies*

PHOTO: X

Pak to repatriate over 1.3 million Afghans

ISLAMABAD, 6 AUG

The Pakistan government has decided to repatriate over 1.3 million Afghan refugees holding Proof of Registration cards from 1 September, a media report said on Wednesday. The efforts to send back Afghan refugees began in 2023 when the government announced to expel all illegal aliens. According to government sources, so far about 800,000 Afghan citizens have been repatriated. The Dawn newspaper reported that the federal government has informed the provinces that the formal repatriation and deportation of over 1.3 million Afghan refugees holding Proof of Registration (PoR) cards will begin on 1 September. *—PTI*

Iran executes man 'spying' for Israel, another IS member

DUBAI, 6 AUG

Iran executed two men in separate cases Wednesday, accusing one of spying for Israel and another of being a member of the Islamic State group, state media reported. A report by the judiciary news website Mizanonline identified the alleged spy as Rouzbeh Vadi, who was accused of relaying classified information to Israel's intelligence service, the Mossad. Authorities said Vadi provided information about an Iranian nuclear scientist who was killed during Israel's June airstrikes on Iran. Vadi met the Mossad officers five times in Vienna, Austria, the report said. Iran has hanged seven people for espionage during the conflict with Israel. Iran separately hanged a member of Islamic State group. *—PTI*

Indian-origin prof caught in child-sex sting in US

SAN DIEGO, 6 AUG

An Indian-origin professor at the University of California San Diego (UCSD) was caught while allegedly trying to meet a 14-year-old boy for sex. The vigilante sting operation was coordinated by a California-based advocacy group People vs Predators. Viral footage shows members of the group confronting the professor at a supermarket, where he had apparently planned to meet the boy. The professor did not realise he had been speaking to activists pretending to be the teenager on the Grindr app. He admitted to carrying lubricant and a douche in his backpack. However, San Diego police refused to arrest the man. *—Agencies*

Putin meets Trump's envoy as tensions soar

Russia refrains from commenting as trade deadline nears

NEW YORK, 6 AUG

US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin for over three hours in Moscow as nuclear tensions escalated between the two global superpowers. The meeting also comes days before Trump's deadline for Russia to reach a peace deal with Ukraine or face severe tariffs, which would also hit countries buying Moscow's oil.

Putin's Foreign Affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov said that Putin and Witkoff had a "useful and constructive conversation" that focused on the Ukrainian crisis and, in a nod toward improving relations between Washington and Moscow, "prospects for possible development of strategic cooperation between the US and Russia."

"Our side has forwarded some signals, in particular on the Ukrainian issue, and corresponding signals were received from President Trump," Ushakov said. He refused to disclose too many details, saying that Russia would wait to see when Witkoff could report to Trump.

The visit is Witkoff's fifth trip to Moscow in his capacity as Trump's lead negotiator with the Kremlin.

Earlier, Witkoff took an early morning stroll through Zaryadye Park, a stone's throw from the Kremlin, with Kirill Dmitriev, the Russian President's envoy for investment and economic cooperation, footage aired by TASS showed. Dmitriev said later on social platform X that "dialogue will prevail."

Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff during their meeting at the Kremlin in Moscow on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

RUSSIA CONTINUES OFFENSIVE

Overnight from Tuesday to Wednesday, Russian forces hit a recreational centre in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, killing two people and injuring 12, including two children. Russia also struck the Ukrainian power grid and facilities for heating and cooking gas as Ukraine makes preparations for winter. *—Agencies*

> **I don't know anything about (trade with Russia), I'd have to check, but we'll get back to you on that. You just take a look at the (wars I've stopped) just over the last two or three months, it's been amazing. This is the one I'm trying to stop. This is the one we're working hardest on**
>
> **—DONALD TRUMP,** US President

> **(I had) a productive conversation with Trump, with the key focus of course being ending the war.... We spoke about sanctions against Russia. Their economy continues to decline, and that's exactly why Moscow is so sensitive to this prospect and Trump's resolve**
>
> **—VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY,** Ukrainian President

Palestinians mourn their relative killed while trying to reach aid trucks entering northern Gaza Strip in Gaza City on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

Israel claims Hamas is behind starvation; UN blames Israel

NEW YORK, 6 AUG

Israel called an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council on Tuesday to demand the release of its emaciated hostages, including one seen digging his own grave. Their plight drew widespread sympathy -- but the 2 million Palestinians starving in Gaza got even more.

Most council members blamed the Israeli government and military for the two-month blockade of Gaza and failure to allow enough food into the conflict-wracked territory.

38 Palestinians, mainly aid seekers, were killed by Israel in Gaza. At least 5 people starved to death.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar, who flew to New York to attend the council meeting, accused Russia and other unnamed council members as well as the international media of perpetuating "so many lies". He claimed that Hamas and Islamic Jihad's starved the hostages taken during the 7 October attacks "while the terrorists enjoy meat, fish and vegetables".

Itay David, the older brother of emaciated hostage Evyatar David, who was pictured over the weekend in a Gaza tunnel saying he was digging his own grave, urged the 15 council members in a video briefing to get humanitarian aid to the hostages, saying they are denied "the most basic necessities of life".

Yet the council remained unconvinced, and flayed Israel for preventing Humanitarian aid into the Strip. Acting US Ambassador Dorothy Shea said President Donald Trump has recognised "real starvation" in Gaza.

British UN Ambassador Barbara Woodward said, "Since the ceasefire ended, the suffering of the hostages and Palestinian civilians has plumbed to new and shocking depths," she said.

"Israel's aid restrictions have led to famine now unfolding in Gaza". *—PTI*

Not Trump, will call Modi & Xi instead: Lula

BRASILIA, 6 AUG

Brazil's President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said that he will not call US President Donald Trump to negotiate with him. Silva said that Trump is not interested in negotiation.

"I'm not going to call Trump to negotiate anything, because he doesn't want to talk. But rest assured, I will call Trump to invite him to come to the COP, because I want to know what he thinks about the climate issue. I'll have the courtesy to call him," he said. "I'll call him, (Chinese Premier) Xi Jinping, I'll call Prime Minister Modi, I'll call. I just won't call (Russian President Vladimir) Putin, because Putin can't travel right now. But I will call

many Presidents". Lula's comments come after Trump imposed 50 per cent tariffs on Brazil for its trial against former president Jair Bolsonaro's attempted insurrection. Trump later said that Lula "can talk to me anytime he wants". Notably, all the countries that Lula mentioned were members of the BRICs bloc. *—Agencies*

NEIGHBOURS IN KNOTS

MASSIVE CHIKUNGUNYA OUTBREAK IN CHINA WITH 7K CASES

TAIPEI, AUG 6

An outbreak of the chikungunya virus in China has prompted authorities to take preventive measures from mosquito nets and clouds of disinfectant, threatening fines for people who fail to disperse standing water and even deploying drones to hunt down insect breeding grounds.

More than 7,000 cases of the disease have been reported as of Wednesday, focused largely on the manufacturing hub of Foshan near Hong Kong, which has reported only one case. Numbers of new cases appear to be dropping slowly, according to authorities.

Chikungunya is spread by mosquitoes and causes fever and joint pain, similar to dengue fever, with the young, older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions most at risk.

Chinese state television has shown workers spraying disinfectant. *—PTI*

HALF THE BUREAUCRATS HAVE LAND IN PORTUGAL: PAK DEFENCE MINISTER

ISLAMABAD, 6 AUG

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said that the nation's top bureaucracy has purchased property in Portugal, claiming that billions of dollars in illegal wealth was sent abroad.

Asif is known for controversial statements, having claimed that Pakistan did the West's dirty work by supporting terrorist organisations shortly after the Pahalgam attack.

His intentions behind the quote were not immediately clear.

"More than half of the bureaucracy of the dear country has bought property in Portugal and is preparing to get citizenship. And these are famous bureaucrats. They are living a comfortable retirement life after eating billions of rupees," he wrote on X. "One of the closest bureaucrats to Buzdar has only received a salute on the marriage of four billion daughters and is living a comfortable retirement life." *—Agencies*

Trump projects Vance as 'most likely' heir

NEW YORK, 6 AUG

US President Donald Trump has suggested that Vice President JD Vance is "most likely" the heir apparent to serve as the 2028 Republican candidate, the furthest he has gone in backing Vance.

Trump added that Secretary of State Marco Rubio can also join him in "some form" to take over the MAGA movement.

"Well, I think most likely. In all fairness, he's the vice president," Trump said on Tuesday while answering a question on his "heir apparent" to MAGA.

Trump, who assumed office over six months ago, said that it is "too early" to talk about successors, but Vance is certainly "doing a great job, and he would be probably favourite at this point," CNN reported.

Vance, 40, is a former Marine and served as Ohio Senator from 2023 to 2025. He has carved out a sizable role in the second Trump administration for himself. Rubio, in an interview with Fox News last month, brushed off talks of his presidential ambitions for 2028 and said that he is focused on his current job.

Rubio and Vance competed for the Vice President's post but now work closely to promote Trump's policies.

Notably, Vance had earlier likened Trump to Hitler before eventually becoming his right-hand. *—PTI*

FBI may arrest Texan Democrats

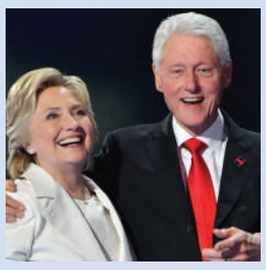
Trump said the FBI may have to help Texas Republicans arrest Democrats who left state to block a plan to redraw electoral boundaries.

Stanford lays off 360 employees

Stanford University said on Tuesday it has laid off over 360 employees, citing budget constraints that it attributed to Trumps' federal funding policies.

Sydney hottest, can't stand Taylor: Don

After learning that actress Sydney Sweeney was a registered Republican in 2024, Trump now said her American Eagle ad was the "hottest ad" on the market right now. Simultaneously, he attacked singer Taylor Swift, saying that she is "no longer hot". He wrote on Truth Social "Ever since I alerted the world as to what (Swift) was by saying on TRUTH that I can't stand her (HATE!). She was booed out of the Super Bowl and became, NO LONGER HOT. The tide has seriously turned — Being WOKE is for losers, being Republican is what you want to be."



Bill and Hillary subpoenaed in Epstein case

Former US president Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary are among high-profile figures subpoenaed by a Congressional committee investigating the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. aRepublican James Comer, chairman of the House Oversight Committee, issued the subpoenas to the Clintons and eight other individuals. The panel has also subpoenaed the Justice Department itself for records related to Epstein. This comes after Epstein's former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell reportedly indicated that she was willing to testify before an investigative committee.

MEMORIES OF HORROR

Hiroshima marks 80 years of N-bombing

HIROSHIMA, 6 AUG

Hiroshima on Wednesday marked the 80th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of the western Japanese city, with many aging survivors expressing frustration about growing support among global leaders for nuclear weapons possession for deterrence.

With the number of survivors rapidly declining and their average age now exceeding 86, the anniversary is considered the last milestone event for many of them.

"We do not have much time left, while we face greater nuclear threat than ever," Nihon Hidankyo, a Japanese grassroots organisation of survivors that won the Nobel Peace Prize last year for its pursuit of nuclear abolishment, said in a statement. "Our biggest challenge now is to change nuclear weapons states that give us cold shoulders even just a little."

Protesters sit outside the Atomic Bomb Dome ahead of a memorial service to mark the 80th anniversary of the US atomic bombing in Hiroshima on Wednesday *PHOTO: PTI*

The bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August, 1945, destroyed the city, killing 140,000 people. A second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000 more. Japan surrendered on 15 August, ending World War II and Japan's nearly half-century of aggression in Asia.

Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and other officials laid flowers at the cenotaph. Survivors and their families were expected to start paying tribute to the victims at the peace memorial park around sunrise, hours before the official ceremony.

However, US President Donald Trump's recent remark justifying Washington's attack in June on Iran by comparing it to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, disappointed the survivors. *—Agencies*

Trump ally Nawrocki assumes Polish Presidency

WARSAW, 6 AUG

Conservative Karol Nawrocki will take office Wednesday as Poland's new President, which could set the country on a more nationalist course — and cast doubt on the viability of the centrist government of Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

Most day-to-day power in Poland rests with the prime minister, chosen by the parliament. However, the president holds the power to influence foreign policy and veto laws.

Nawrocki, who was supported by US President Donald Trump ahead of a narrow victory in a runoff election in June, is a 42-year-old historian who had no political experience prior to campaigning. He was not even a political party member until being approached by the conservative Law and Justice party that governed Poland from 2015 to 2023.

Nawrocki's supporters describe him as the embodiment of traditional, patriotic values. Many of them oppose abortion and LGBTQ+ visibility and say Nawrocki reflects the values they grew up with.

The American conservative group CPAC held its first meeting in Poland during the campaign to give him a boost. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Gold rises by ₹200 to ₹99,020/10g

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Gold prices rose Rs 200 to Rs 99,020 per 10g in the national capital on Wednesday due to continuous buying by stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Gold of 99.9 per cent purity had finished at Rs 98,820 per 10g in the previous market session. In the national capital, gold of 99.5 per cent purity increased Rs 100 to Rs 98,600 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. It had closed at Rs 98,500 per 10g on Tuesday. As per Sarafa Association, silver prices climbed Rs 500 to Rs 1,12,500 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) on Wednesday. Spot gold slipped USD 17.51 or 0.52 per cent to USD 3,363.35 per ounce in New York. *—PTI*

Rupee recovers by 15P, settles at 87.73 against USD

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

The rupee recovered from record low level and closed 15 paise higher at 87.73 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday, supported by a volatile greenback and the Reserve Bank's decision to hold interest rate steady. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 87.72 and moved in a range of 87.63-87.80 during the day before settling at 87.73 (provisional), up 15 paise from its previous close. The rupee revisited its lowest-ever intraday level and ended with a loss of 22 paise at 87.88 against the US dollar on Tuesday. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was up marginally 0.01 per cent to 98.79 after falling overnight. *—PTI*

Westermeier named Airbus Prez, MD for India

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Airbus has appointed Jürgen Westermeier as the President and Managing Director for India and South Asia. The appointment of 53-year-old Jürgen, currently the Executive Vice-President and Chief Procurement Officer at Airbus, will be effective from 1 September, the aircraft maker said in a release on Wednesday. He will succeed Rémi Maillard, who will become Executive Vice-President Engineering for Commercial Aircraft and Head of Technology at Airbus. India is a key market for Airbus, which has a significant presence in commercial aircraft and defence segments. He joined Airbus as Chief Procurement Officer in 2020, where he was in charge of procurement across Airbus divisions. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Andhra govt backs ₹35K cr green energy plant

MACHILIPATNAM, 6 AUG

A delegation from Poland and representatives of the JKSH Group met with Andhra Pradesh Mines, Geology, and Excise Minister Kollu Ravindra here to discuss setting up a Rs 35,000 crore Green Energy plant near the Machilipatnam port. The minister supported the project, citing the port's strategic location, seamless connectivity, and existing infrastructure as key advantages. He assured the group that land would be allotted near the port and asserted that the proposed plant could generate around 10,000 jobs, boosting local employment. *—PTI*

RBI retains FY26 GDP growth at 6.5%

RBI lowers inflation forecast to 3.1%, cites monsoon and congenial financial conditions

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

The Reserve Bank on Wednesday retained the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year at 6.5 per cent while lowering the inflation forecast to 3.1 per cent from 3.7 per cent.

Unveiling the third bi-monthly monetary policy for 2025–26, RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra said the above normal southwest monsoon, lower inflation, rising capacity utilisation, and congenial financial conditions continue to support domestic economic activity.

The supportive monetary, regulatory and fiscal policies, including robust government capital expenditure, should also boost demand. The services sector is expected to remain buoyant, with sustained growth in construction and trade in the coming months.

"Growth is robust and as per projections, though it is below our aspirations. The uncertainties of tariffs are still evolving. Monetary policy transmission is continuing," the Governor said.

Retail inflation for Q1 2026-27 is projected at 4.9 per cent *PHOTO: FREEPIK*

Rural consumption remains resilient while urban consumption revival, especially discre tionary spending, is tepid, he said.

The RBI said CPI inflation for 2025-26 is projected at 3.1 per.

Retail inflation for Q1 2026-27 is projected at 4.9 per cent. The risks are evenly balanced.

RBI to standardise claim settlement process

The RBI Gover nor Sanjay said the central bank will standardise the claims settlement procedure for bank accounts and lockers.

This is aimed at simplifying the process for settlement of claims in favour of nominees of deceased customers.

Besides, he said, the central bank plans to expand the functionality in RBI Retail-Direct platform to enable retail investors to invest in treasury bills through systematic investment plans.

Taking necessary steps to support growth

Amid uncertainties over global trade front, Malhotra said the central bank is taking all necessary steps to support economic growth. *—PTI*

RBI Guv says India doing well, not a dead economy

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

The Indian economy is "doing very well" and contributing more to global growth than the US, Reserve Bank Governor Sanjay Malhotra said on Wednesday, days after US President Donald Trump's remark of India being a dead economy.

The country is expected to grow 6.5 per cent, as against the International Monetary Fund's (IMF's) estimate of about 3 per cent global growth in 2025, Malhotra told reporters at the central bank headquarters here.

"We are contributing about 18 per cent, which is more than the US where the contribution is expected to be much less -- about 11 per cent or something. We are doing very well and we will continue to improve further," Malhotra replyed to a question on Trump's recent comments.

Malhotra said the aspirational growth rate for India should be more than 6.5 per cent, which the RBI is projecting for FY25, and added that the country has grown at a yearly average of 7.8 per cent in the past.

Amid the trade policy negotiations, Trump had called India as a "dead economy" while expressing disappointment with New Delhi's posturing to continue buying cheap oil from Russia.

"I don't care what India does with Russia. They can take their dead economies down together," Trump said. *—PTI*

Auto, realty, bank shares dip as RBI holds rates

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Interest rate-sensitive stocks in the auto, realty, and banking sectors fell sharply after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy rate unchanged at 5.5 per cent, citing global trade risks from US President Donald Trump's policies. The BSE Realty index dropped 2.11 per cent, with major losses in Prestige Estates, DLF, and Godrej Properties. The BSE Auto index declined 0.85 per cent, led by Bosch, HeroMotoCorp, and Hyundai.

IndusInd Bank and IDFC First fell, while ICICI and HDFC Bank edged higher. The BSE Sensex slipped 0.10 per cent to 80,629.26. RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra maintained the FY26 growth forecast at 6.5 per cent and retained a neutral stance after three previous rate cuts. *—PTI*

'US tariff impact on GDP negligible'

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The 25 per cent tariffs on Indian goods announced by US President Donald Trump will have "negligible" impact on the country's GDP as only USD 8.1 billion of exports to America might get affected, according to a PHDCCI study released on Wednesday.

The tariffs announced by the US are likely to come into effect on August 7, 2025.

The paper, released by the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI), also recommends a series of measures to mitigate the impact of US tariffs.

"Our analysis indicates that there will be an estimated impact of only 1.87 per cent on India's total global merchandise exports and a negligible 0.19 per cent on India's GDP as a result of a 25 per cent tariff announced by the US on India," said Hemant Jain, President, PHDCCI.

The study said the total potential export impact is estimated at USD 8.1 billion based on 2024-25 merchandise exports of USD 86.5 billion (1.87 per cent of India's total global export).

Among other sectors, the study said the levies would impact engineering goods (USD 1.8 billion), gems and jewellery (USD 932 million), and ready-made garments (USD 500 million).

In the wake of the US tariffs, the industry body has recommended several measures, including increasing market penetration, product development and market diversification.

It suggested that stakeholders should negotiate bundled-pricing deals (textiles plus accessories) to absorb some tariff cost and maintain shelf-price competitiveness. "Leverage Indian diaspora networks (trade fairs, cultural events) to boost volume with existing buyers under current product portfolios." *—PTI*

Markets slide as RBI keeps rates firm

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Benchmark BSE Sensex reversed its early gains to close lower by 160 points on Wednesday due to selling in IT and healthcare shares amid the RBI policy decision to keep the key interest rates unchanged.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 166.26 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 80,543.99 with 18 of its constituents ending lower and 12 with gains. During the day, it declined 261.43 points or 0.32 per cent to hit a low of 80,448.82.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 75.35 points or 0.31 per cent to close at 24,574.20. In the intraday session, the index decreased 110.35 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a low of 24,539.20.

Among the Sensex firms, Sun Pharmaceuticals, Tech Mahindra, HCL Technologies, Infosys, Bajaj Finance, Eternal, Tata Consultancy Services, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, ITC and L&T were the major laggards.

Asian Paints, Mahindra & Mahindra, BEL, Adani Ports,

State Bank of India, Trent, HDFC Bank were among the gainers.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept its policy interest rate unchanged on Wednesday, as policymakers weighed the risks posed by US President Donald Trump's trade policies and the uncertainties surrounding the potential for higher tariffs.

The RBI also retained the GDP growth projection for the current fiscal year at 6.5 per cent while lowering the inflation forecast to 3.1 per cent from 3.7 per cent.

Sensex fell by 308.47 points to close at 80,710.25 and Nifty dipped 73.20 points to 24,649.55 on Tuesday. *—PTI*

NSDL SHARES JUMP 15% IN DEBUT TRADE

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Shares of National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) on Wednesday listed with a premium of 15 per cent against the issue price of Rs 800.

The depository's stock is listed at Rs 880 apiece, a jump of 10 per cent from the issue price on the BSE. Later, it rose by 15 per cent to trade at Rs 920 on the exchange.

The company's market valuation stood at Rs 18,249 crore on the BSE.

Meanwhile, the market is trading in the negative territory. The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 102.09 points or 0.13 per cent to 80,608.16.

The Rs 4,011 crore Initial Public Offering (IPO) of NSDL received 41 times subscription on the closing day of bidding on Friday.

Last week, the NSDL mobilised over Rs 1,201 crore from anchor investors.

The initial share sale had a price band of Rs 760-800 per share.

Since the public issue is entirely an OFS, NSDL will not receive any proceeds from the IPO. *—PTI*

WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL BATTERY SWITCHED ON

The Waratah Super Battery, one of the world's most powerful batteries, has been turned on in New South Wales, Australia. Here is all we need to know about it:

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

In the future, super batteries will replace coal power plants.

FEATURES

- Set up on 14 hectares of land.
- It has a capacity of 850 megawatts (MW) but it currently supplies only **350 MW,** which is half of its original capacity.
- Can provide energy to around 1M houses for an hour.
- The battery has a usable storage capacity of about 1,400 MWh.
- At full working capacity, it can charge 46M phones in an hour.
- It is the size of 8 AFL football fields.
- Carries over 3,500 containers of batteries.

WORKING OF WARATAH

- The battery consists of multiple parts, put together to perform unique tasks.
- These parts act as the shock absorber in case of a power outage or surge.

WHAT IS SUPER BATTERY?

- It stores energy converted from solar energy.
- It is rechargeable.
- It is environmentally friendly.
- Reduces metal pollution.

RESEARCH: JAYASREE JAYAPRAKASH

Mahindra to give ₹400-500 cr ESOPs to 23K staffs

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

In an industry-first initiative, Mahindra & Mahindra is launching a one-time Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) for about 23,000 employees, including factory floor workers, as a reward for their contribution to the company's growth journey, Group CEO & MD Anish Shah said.

The initiative covers three of Mahindra's key subsidiaries -- Mahindra & Mahindra (auto and farm sectors), Mahindra Electric Automobile, and Mahindra Last Mile Mobility, Shah said in an interview with PTI Videos.

This marks a rare -- and possibly first -- instance of a large Indian conglomerate extending ESOPs to shop floor workers. The shares will be granted in the form of restricted stock units (RSUs).

"So this is something that I am very happy about and very proud about our company's culture," he said. *—PTI*

100% MADE IN INDIA

PAYTM NOW AS INDIAN AS TATA WITH ZERO CHINESE OWNERSHIP

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Nearly nine years after founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma declared Paytm to be "as Indian as Maruti," that sentiment has become reality. The fintech firm is now entirely Indian-owned following the complete exit of Chinese investor Ant Group.

Antfin (Netherlands) Holding BV, an affiliate of Jack Ma's Ant Financial, has sold its remaining 5.84 per cent stake in Paytm's parent company, One97 Communications, through a block deal worth approximately Rs 3,803 crore. This marks a significant shift in Paytm's shareholding structure, eliminating Chinese ownership and aligning it more closely with domestic and global institutional investors. A person close to the development remarked, "Paytm is now as Indian as Tata."

The change comes on the heels of a strong Q1 FY26 performance. The Noida-based company posted a net profit of Rs 123 crore its first-ever fully profitable quarter beating analyst expectations. Revenue rose 28 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1,918 crore, while contribution profit surged 52 per cent to Rs 1,151 crore.

Paytm continues to lead in innovation, recently launching features such as privacy controls for individual transactions, home screen widgets, personalised UPI IDs, and downloadable UPI statements. A consolidated view of all UPI-linked bank balances is also now available.

Furthering its global ambitions, Paytm now supports UPI payments in countries including the UAE, Singapore, France, Mauritius, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Nepal simplifying transactions for Indian travellers abroad. *—PTI*

6.8M ACCOUNTS BANNED

WhatsApp launches new 'safety overview' tool

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

WhatsApp has launched a new 'safety overview', which will alert a user when someone not in their contact adds them to a new WhatsApp group that they may not recognise, as the Meta's messaging platform intensified its crackdown on scams and frauds.

The safety overview will contain key information about the said group and tips to stay safe, it said. "From there, you can exit the group without ever having to look at the chat. And if you think you might recognise the group after seeing the safety overview, you can choose to see the chat for more context," WhatsApp said. And notifications from the group will be silenced until the user marks that they do wish to stay.

Meta's messaging platform further said it is exploring ways to caution users when they start a chat with someone not in the contacts by showing more context about the person they are messaging to.

WhatsApp said it also takes down attempts by criminal scam centres, often fuelled by forced labour and operated by organised crime primarily in South East Asia.

In the first six months this year, as part of its efforts to protect people from scams, WhatsApp and Meta's security teams detected and banned over 6.8 million accounts linked to scam centres. *—PTI*

UK bans Zara ads over 'unhealthily thin' models

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Two adverts by fashion retailer Zara have been banned for featuring models who appeared "unhealthily thin", according to the UK's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA).

One advert showed a model in a short dress, with shadows and a slicked-back hairstyle making her appear "gaunt", while the pose exaggerated the thinness of her legs and made her arms look out of proportion. The second advert featured a low-cut shirt that drew attention to the model's "protruding collarbones".

The ASA ruled the adverts "irresponsible" and stated they must not appear again in their current form. Zara has since removed the images and said both models were in good health. *—Agencies*

SuperGaming raises $15M in fresh funding

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Homegrown online gaming company SuperGaming has raised USD 15 million in a fresh funding round at nearly five times the valuation of its previous round around 4 years ago, a top official of the company said on Wednesday.

SuperGaming CEO and Co-Founder Roby John told PTI that the company had raised USD 5 million at a valuation of USD 21 million in 2021.

The fresh funds have been raised at an enterprise valuation of about USD 100 million, he added.The fresh funding round was led by Skycatcher and Steadview Capital, with support from global strategic investors such as a16z Speedrun, Bandai Namco 021 Fund and Neowiz, as well as notable Web3 Investors, including Polygon Ventures. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Root should have been Man of the Series: Brook

LONDON, 6 AUG

England batter Harry Brook disagreed with India coach Gautam Gambhir's decision to name him as Player of the Series, saying the honour should have gone to Joe Root for his prolific run in the five-Test series. With the series ending 2-2, each team's coach selected one player from the opposition for the Player of the Series award. While England head coach Brendon McCullum picked India captain Shubman Gill, Gambhir chose Brook as England's standout performer. Brook played a destructive innings of 111 off 98 balls on the fourth day of the final Test, putting England on the brink of a record chase before the home side collapsed, losing seven wickets for 66 runs to concede the match. —*PTI*

Fleetwood to compete in DP World India C'ship

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Leading English golfer and seven-time winner on the European Tour, Tommy Fleetwood, is set to compete alongside career grand slam winner Rory McIlroy in the USD4 million DP World India Championship, to be played at the Delhi Golf Club from 16-19 October. Fleetwood, an Olympic silver medallist and European Ryder Cup star, will tee up in Delhi for the first time since 2016. The 34-year-old was named European No. 1 after topping the Race to Dubai Rankings in 2017, and the following year made a memorable Ryder Cup debut in Paris, winning four points out of five to help his side to victory. He represented Europe on two more occasions, delivering the winning moment in Rome in 2023 in his 3&1 victory over Rickie Fowler.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X/@WEISSMAN

German club drops Israeli striker over anti-Gaza posts

DUBAI, 6 AUG

German football club Fortuna Düsseldorf pulled out of the deal at the last minute. The late change of heart in the club's management came after fan backlash over some of Weissman's old anti-Gaza posts. Weissman had reportedly agreed a deal to sign for the German club from Spanish side Granada, but fans strongly objected to the move, making Dusseldorf pull the plug in the last minute., On Tuesday, the club made the decision public, though without highlighting the reason. A statement from Dusseldorf read: "We looked into Shon Weissman intensively, but ultimately decided not to sign him".—*PTI*

Anurag declared ineligible for BFI elections

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Former Sports Minister Anurag Thakur was once again rendered ineligible to contest the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) elections, with his name omitted from the electoral college released on Wednesday for the 21 August polls. The Himachal Pradesh Boxing Association, HPBA, had nominated Thakur and its President Bhandari as its two representatives for the Annual General Meeting, AGM, where the key agenda is the election of new office-bearers for the 2025-2029 term. However, the BFI interim committee, constituted by World Boxing in April to oversee the federation's daily affairs, issued a 66-member electoral college after scrutiny, excluding Thakur's name.—*PTI*

ICC TEST RANKINGS

Mohammed Siraj, surrounded by welcoming fans in Hyderabad PHOTO: ANI

Siraj achieves career-high ranking

DUBAI, 6 AUG

India pacer Mohammed Siraj has attained a career-best 15th position in the latest ICC Test rankings following his match-winning performance in the fifth and final Test against England at The Oval.

Siraj jumped 12 spots following his nine wickets in the match, including a five-for, as India defeated the hosts by six runs in a thriller to draw the series 2-2. With England requiring 35 runs on the last day with four wickets in hand, a charged-up Siraj, who was adjudged 'Player of the Match', accounted for three batters, including the previous dismissal of Gus Atkinson, to earn India a remarkable win.

Siraj's best ICC ranking so far had been a 16th position that he reached in January last year.

Prasidh Krishna also attained a career-best 59th position after he, along with Siraj, became only the second Indian pair to take four or more wickets each in both innings of a Test, a feat earlier accomplished by spinners Bishan Bedi and Erapalli Prasanna against Australia in Delhi in 1969. India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal returned to the top-5 in the Test batting rankings following his second century in the series at The Oval. Jaiswal rose three spots and is on 792 points.

Gill named for ICC's Player of the Month award

India captain Shubman Gill was on Wednesday named among the three nominees for ICC's Player of the Month award for July, along with South Africa's Mulder and Ben Stokes. Gill led India remarkably in the recently-concluded Anderson-Tendulkar Trophy against England as his young side emerged with a hard-fought 2-2 draw, a series in which the 25-year-old rewrote batting records. —*PTI*

Win without Bumrah is coincidence: Tendulkar

Says Siraj has great attitude and deserves credit

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Legendary India batter Sachin Tendulkar said he loves Mohammed Siraj's attitude, adding that the fast bowler doesn't get the credit he deserves. On day five of The Oval, Siraj picked a sensational 5-104 as India levelled the five-match series 2-2 with a six-run win over England.

Batting great Sachin Tendulkar feels that India winning two Tests against England in Jasprit Bumrah's absence was a mere "coincidence" and the talismanic pace spearhead's quality remains "exceptional and unbelievable". England had no answers to Siraj's accuracy, as he tore through the lower order with a burst of three wickets while conceding only nine runs in 25 balls on the fifth day.

Sachin Tendulkar

Fittingly, Siraj sealed victory for India by knocking over Gus Atkinson's off-stump to enter the rich Indian cricketing folklore., "Unbelievable. Superb approach. I love his attitude.

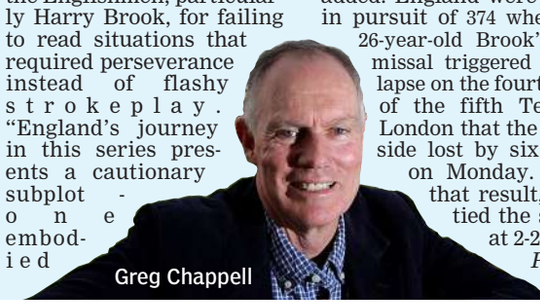
I love the spring in his legs. For a fast bowler to be constantly in your face like that, no batsman will like it. And the approach he maintained until the end on the last day; I could also hear commentators saying he bowled around 90mph (145kph) on the last day, after having bowled more than 1,000 deliveries in the series. —*PTI*

Chappell criticises England's 'Bazball' philosophy

LONDON, 6 AUG

Positive cricket doesn't mean reckless cricket, said Australian great Greg Chappell, lambasting England's 'Bazball' philosophy on Wednesday during the high-intensity drawn Test series against India.

In his column for 'ESPNCricinfo', Chappell, while lavishing praise on the young Indian team for being fearless, criticised the Englishmen, particularly Harry Brook, for failing to read situations that required perseverance instead of flashy strokeplay. "England's journey in this series presents a cautionary subplot - one embodied by the brilliant but mercurial Harry Brook, whose virtues I have extolled publicly before," Chappell, a former India head coach, said. "He has time, range, confidence, and that rare gift of making batting look effortless. But cricket, particularly Test cricket, is not just about shot-making. It's about judgment. About recognising when the moment demands attack - and when it demands restraint," he added. England were 301/3 in pursuit of 374 when the 26-year-old Brook's dismissal triggered a collapse on the fourth day of the fifth Test in London that the home side lost by six runs on Monday. With that result, ndia tied the series at 2-2. —*PTI*



Greg Chappell

Fire at tournament venue, Chennai GM postponed

CHENNAI, 6 AUG

The Chennai Grand Masters chess tournament, featuring some well-established Indian and international names, has been postponed to Thursday after a fire broke out at the event's venue, the Hyatt Regency hotel.

The third edition of the competition was scheduled to start on Wednesday.

"Fire at Hotel Hyatt Regency last night, the venue of the Chennai GM. All the players are safe and shifted to another hotel nearby. Tournament postponed by a day," wrote Indian GM and tournament director Srinath Narayanan on his X handle. "Close to midnight, there was an emergency in the Hotel Hyatt Regency in Chennai. Due to an electric fire on the ninth floor, the entire hotel became smoky, and everyone had to evacuate the hotel before it became difficult to breathe," ChessBase India reported.

The organisers informed PTI that the timing of the matches will remain the same, but a rest day has now been removed from the schedule.

Erigaisi, all praise for 'refreshing' Freestyle chess

Over the last month, we were offered a glimpse into the future of chess. The Las Vegas leg of the Freestyle Chess Grand Slam tour and the Esports World Cup in Riyadh saw the cerebral aspect of the sport intertwined with the spectacle as chess attempts to become more spectator-friendly. While the Las Vegas Grand Slam roped in some big-name NBA players, who took part in exhibition events before the tournament, the Esports World Cup saw players compete in a quickfire rapid format, with winners getting to break the loser's key a triangular metallic totem with a player's name engraved on it. World No. 5 Erigaisi will open his campaign against American prodigy Awonder Liang. —*PTI*

NATIONAL BANK OPEN

Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton set up an all-American semifinal

TORONTO, 6 AUG

Taylor Fritz and Ben Shelton won in the quarterfinals of the National Bank Open, setting up the first all-American semifinal in an ATP Masters 1000 tournament in 15 years.

The second-seeded Fritz beat No. 6 seed Andrey Rublev 6-3, 7-6 (4). He hit 20 aces, including one that finished off the match. Shelton, the No. 4 seed, then beat No. 9 Alex de Minaur of Australia 6-3, 6-4. The 22-year-old reached the semifinals of an ATP Masters 1000 tournament for the first time.

The matchup on Wednesday between Fritz and Shelton will be the first time since Andy Roddick beat Mardy Fish at Cincinnati in 2010 that two Americans have met in an ATP Masters 1000 semifinal.

Wednesday's other semifinal will see top-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany, the 2017 tournament winner in Montreal, take on No. 11 Karen Khachanov of Russia. The final is on Thursday. Fritz came out firing in hazy and breezy conditions with three aces to win the first game. He then broke Rublev in securing the match's first eight points. The 27-year-old American, who sits fourth in the ATP Tour rankings and lost last year's U.S. Open final to No. 1 Jannik Sinner, fired two more aces to go up 4-1 before serving out the set.

Naomi Osaka

Naomi Osaka powers into SFs and will face Clara Tauson

Naomi Osaka powered into her first National Bank Open semifinal, beating No. 10 seed Elina Svitolina 6-2, 6-2.

Osaka advanced to face No. 16 seed Clara Tauson, who eliminated sixth-seeded Madison Keys 6-1, 6-4 in the first quarterfinal of the night.

Osaka, the four-time Grand Slam champion who reached No. 1 in the rankings, continued her best performance in a WTA 1000 tournament since reaching the final in Miami in 2022. She stepped away from tennis for 15 months toward the end of that season and had daughter Shai in July 2023. —*PTI*

Elina Svitolina faces abuse after Canada Open loss

MONTREAL, 6 AUG

Ukrainian tennis player Elina Svitolina has spoken out about the deluge of hateful abuse she received online from frustrated gamblers after losing a match in Canada, including messages wishing her death and celebrating Russia killing her compatriots. Following her straight-sets loss to Naomi Osaka in the quarter-finals of the National Bank Open on Tuesday night, Svitolina posted screenshots of the messages on Instagram.

The abuse was directed at her, while other racial slurs also targeted her husband, the French tennis player Gael Monfils, who is Black. One abuser hoped that Russia would "kill all you (expletive) Ukrainians" in the war raging in Ukraine.

"To all the bettors: I'm a mum before I'm an athlete," Svitolina wrote in her Instagram story. "The way you talk to women, to mothers, is SHAMEFUL. If your mothers saw your messages, they'd be disgusted." Earlier this year, British player Katie Boulter said she received death threats during the French Open targeting her and her family, while the WTA and ITF called on betting companies to do more to stem the flood of online abuse players face on social media. —*PTI*

BCCI to stay outside the ambit of RTI Act

NEW DELHI, 3 AUG

In what can be construed as a relief to the BCCI, the Sports Ministry has amended the RTI-related provision of the National Sports Governance Bill, placing only those bodies under its ambit that rely on government grants and assistance.

The bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha by Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on 23 July, and its clause 15 (2) stated that "a recognised sports organisation shall be considered as a public authority under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 concerning the exercise of its functions, duties and powers under this Act."The RTI has been a thorny issue for the BCCI, which has steadfastly opposed coming under it as the Board is not dependent on government funds, unlike a majority of other National Sports Federations (NSFs).

The amendment proposed in the bill effectively puts an end to that apprehension."The amended clause defines public authority as an entity that is relying on government funds or assistance.

With this amendment, there is a clear definition of what a public authority is," a well-placed source told PTI."If this had not been done, it would have been a grey area that could have led to the bill getting held up or being challenged in court. So anything that involves public money will come under RTI. —*PTI*

NEERAJ, ISHAN, PATEL, AND PRIYA ENTER U22 ASIAN BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS FINALS

BANGKOK, 6 AUG

Neeraj, Ishan Kataria, Yatri Patel, and Priya packed a punch on the way to reaching the finals of the U22 Asian Boxing Champion ships here on Wednesday. Neeraj relied on his speed and counter-attacking skills to defeat Kyeongho Bang of South Korea 5:0 in the men's 75kg category to book a place in the title showdown, while Ishan Kataria, in the men's 90+kg category, dominated Chen Chen of China with his big punches as the referee had to stop the contest in the third round. Yatri Patel in women's 57kg then reached the final by using a combination of left-right punches to dominate Vietnam's Thi Nhung Quand and win by a unanimous 5:0 verdict. Priya (women's 60kg) also came up with a dominating performance to overpower Uzbekistan's Odinakhon Ismoil ova to reach the final. —*PTI*

AFTER A DECADE

Heung-min joins LA from Tottenham

LOS ANGELES, 6 AUG

Son Heung-min agreed to a contract with Los Angeles FC on Wednesday, finalizing his move to Major League Soccer after a decade at Tottenham Hotspur.

The 33-year-old South Korean superstar forward is joining LAFC three days after he formally announced his decision to leave Tottenham.

Son attended LAFC's Leagues Cup match against Tigres at BMO Stadium on Tuesday night, watching from a luxury suite. LAFC will formally introduce Son at a news conference on Wednesday.

Son Heung-min

LAFC, a deep-pocketed club with significant team success in its first eight seasons of existence, reportedly paid a transfer fee of more than $20 million, which could end up being the most ever for an MLS move. Son was a beloved presence at Spurs, scoring 173 goals in 454 competitive appearances for the North London club while rising to global prominence with his combination of speed, playmaking skill, and finishing acumen. The captain was given a memorable farewell last week in Seoul during Tottenham's exhibition match against Newcastle, getting a guard of honor from both teams and tearfully exiting in the second half while nearly 65,000 fans roared.

But South Korea's most popular athlete and almost certainly the greatest Asian soccer player in history has chosen an auspicious stage for the next chapter of his groundbreaking career.

Los Angeles has the world's largest ethnic Korean population outside Korea, with the city's vibrant Koreatown district sitting just a couple of miles from LAFC's BMO Stadium.

LAFC is undoubtedly hoping to market Son as a soccer counterpart to the Dodgers' Shohei Ohtani, albeit on a smaller scale. Son's move to California also puts him in a position to make an impact on and off the field at the World Cup. —*PTI*

Harish, Tayin enter 3rd round in Asian Surfing C'ships

CHENNAI, 6 AUG

India's Harish Prakash and Tayin Arun produced fine efforts to enter the third round of the Under-18 boys' category in the Asian Surfing Championships here on Wednesday.

On the third day of the tournament, Arun registered the best score among the Indian competitors, 9.23, while moving to the third round behind Tinn Johnson of Thailand, who logged 9.60 points.

The 11-year-old Prakash was also impressive, accumulating 7.97 points to secure a third-round berth, behind Malaysia's Lucas Santiago (10.57 points).

The third Indian surfer in the fray, Prahlad Sriram, finished third in Heat 6 with a score of 4.94, and he will now compete in the Repechage round two.

However, China's Shidong Wu (17.34 points) and Korea's Kanoa Heejae (13.10 points) were the top performers of the first round. Competitions in the senior men's and women's sections will resume on Thursday. —*PTI*